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THE

# Manchester



# Quarterly

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OF

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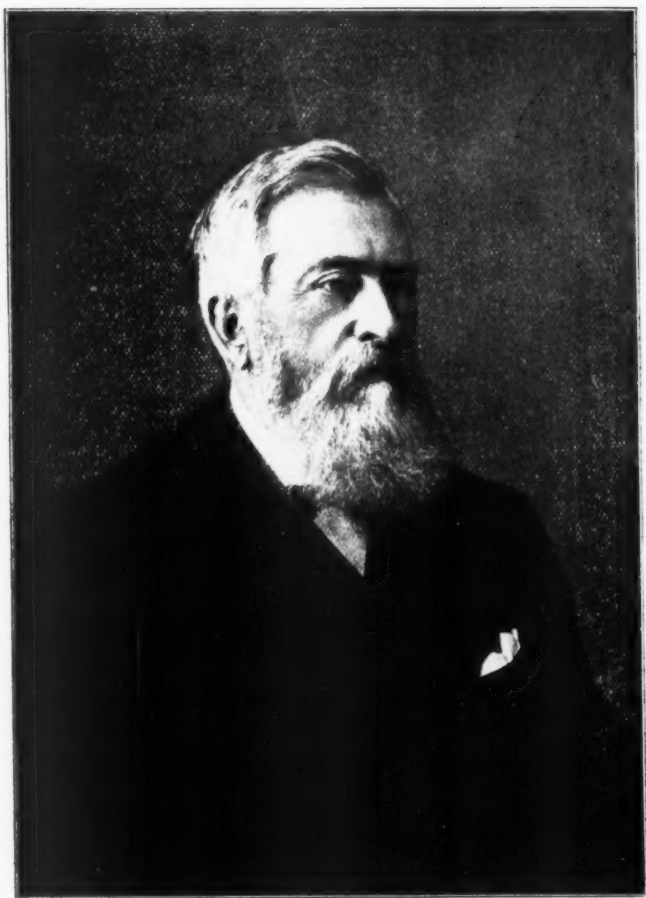
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*From a Photograph.*

ROBERT LANGTON.



## ROBERT LANGTON: IN MEMORIAM.

BY JOHN MORTIMER.

LOOKING back along the vista of memory for the first point of impressionable contact with Robert Langton, whose death occurred but recently, I find it under conditions suggestive of the Orient, and then only as a name attached to a wood engraving. A good many years ago, thirty or more, there was a weekly paper published in Manchester called *The Sphinx*, a journal of criticism and humour, edited by the second president of the Manchester Literary Club, Mr. John Howard Nodal. The pictorial heading of the title page showed a stretch of desert sand, with pyramids and a ruined temple in the rear, and from the foreground, with the upright letters of its name boldly defined on the arid waste, rose that mysterious colossal head, which has been described as "staring right on with calm, eternal eyes." On the left hand corner of the picture was the name of F. Holding as the delineator, and on the right that of Langton as the engraver. The absence of the Christian name, or any initial thereof, in the engraver's case was suggestive. There was at that time more than one Holding known as an artist, but there was only one Langton of his particular craft. Already, for twenty years at least, he must have been exercising his art in Manchester, but in whatever other connection his name had been met with, it was this one

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which impressed me more than the rest. Being myself a modest contributor to *The Sphinx*, the title-page was, of course, an object of peculiar interest. The name of Langton as a perpetual part of it came to have a pleasant familiarity, and now, as I sit down to write some memorial words regarding the man whom I afterwards came to know so well, he seems, in this relation, to be "a part of those old days to me." *The Sphinx*—like many another journal which has deserved a longer life—"abode its destined hour and went its way," title-page and all, and it was not until six years afterwards, when, in 1877, he became a member of the Manchester Literary Club, that I met Robert Langton for the first time. It was in the old Mitre days, and his advent is associated with the long upper room of that semi-ecclesiastical hostelry. From the first he proved an attractive personality, with his mild-eyed contemplative face and his mild-mannered, unobtrusive ways, and the good impression made upon one then has deepened but never changed. He was not a Lancashire man, but a man of Kent, Gravesend having been the place of his nativity, and there was something pleasantly peculiar in his voice, which had in it a savour of the south, differentiating it from the accustomed folk speech of the north. Modest and retiring in his disposition, he was not, in our meetings, forward in debate, but his utterances were simple and direct, and devoid of any note of affectation or exaggeration. Once, in reviewing Mr. Stuart Reid's "Life of Sydney Smith," he quoted some words which were equally applicable to himself, and to the effect that "into whatever company he (Sydney Smith) was thrown the force of his character immediately asserted itself, and whilst genial to a degree, he never for a moment surrendered his independence or was afraid to utter exactly what he thought." Behind all this modesty, however, and blended with its



gentleness of expression, there was a strong, manly nature. Though, in later years, there was just the indication of a stoop in the shoulders, the result, possibly, of close application to his craft, his tall form suggested physical strength. In recreative directions he was known as an expert swimmer, and there is a belief in his family that he held the Humane Society's medal for saving the life of a boy, whom he pulled out of the Irwell when in flood, near the Cathedral steps. It was characteristic of him that though one met him so often at the Mitre, close by those steps, he never alluded to this incident in his life. There was a musical vein in him, too, and he delighted in the tintinnabulations of bells, especially church and other steeple bells. On Bob Majors and other mysteries of bell-ringing he was an authority, and would discourse eloquently. He had even been a ringer himself in the days of his southern sojourning. He had a delicate ear for the tone of a bell, and when a peal of them was being placed in our Town Hall he accompanied some members of the Town Council to the foundry at Loughborough to ascertain the result of the castings. Of "Great Abel," among that group of bells, there is existing a pictorial representation engraved by himself. In the exercise of his art, too, it may be said that he also engraved the illustrations for North's "Bells of Northamptonshire."

In more mellifluous directions did he also manifest his musical tastes and powers, choosing for his instrument the sweet, melodious flute. He never brought his flute to the Club, nor ever hinted at the accomplishment, but one has heard that he was a player of no mean skill, and had even been known to take part in a duet in the concert-room with very pleasing results. It was in harmony with the gentleness of his nature, this love of the dulcet sounds of flutes and soft recorders.

In his mental disposition he was retrospective, and this was reflected in his tastes, literary and artistic. In a pleasant and acceptable way he seemed to be always a little behind the present time ; to be a thoughtful meditative loiterer as it were. There was an old-world flavour about him, a touch of quaintness ; a black letter ballad seemed more to his liking than modern minstrelsy. In such a vein did he discourse to the Antiquarian Society on treasures of that kind to be found in our Reference Library. A certain attraction of remoteness no doubt led him to join hands with his artist-friend, Fred Holding, in illustrating and publishing an edition of Southey's "Battle of Blenheim." In like manner, old buildings had for him a charm not possessed by later and more jejeune erections. Consistent with this taste, he has left us some comments on "The Remains of Norman Architecture in the Neighbourhood of Manchester." Like Sir Thomas Browne, too, he was learned in matters of urn burial and other forms of sepulture and disposal of the dead. Not in any superficial way, either, for he never trifled with a subject, but with the thoroughness of a true antiquarian and archæologist did he pursue his investigations, and so much so that in a paper of nine pages dealing with "An Obscure Funeral Custom" he tells us that he has not only expended much thought upon it, but, to prepare it, has carefully gone through the pages of many scores of volumes of archæological lore.

Primarily, of course, it was as an artist in wood-engraving that he claimed our attention at the Club, for he had already made a distinguished name for himself in that direction, especially as an illustrator of books. From autobiographical sources one learns how he was first intended for the law, and how, having spent two years in a solicitor's office at Gravesend with a diminishing interest in that occu-

pation, he willingly laid down his legal pen to take up the more attractive graver. In this respect he differed from Thomas Hood, who quite as willingly laid down the graver to take up the pen, though, in his case, it was not for legal, but literary uses. Says Hood, regarding that change in his taste and occupation: "It would be affectation to say that engraving was resigned without regret. There is always something mechanical about the art; moreover it is as unwholesome as wearisome to sit copper-fastened to a board, with a cantele scooped out to accommodate your stomach, if you have one, painfully ruling, ruling, and still ruling lines straight and crooked by the long hundred to the square inch, with the doubly hazardous risk, which Wordsworth so deprecates, of growing double. So farewell, Woollet, Strange, Bartolozzi."

As Hood says, there is always something mechanical about engraving, and an engraver may not be much more than a mechanic; but there is room also for the exercise of very high art even in the cutting of wood blocks. Mr. W. J. Linton, perhaps the greatest of our modern wood-engravers, in his "Manual of Instruction," shows where the artistic faculty comes into exercise. There is a form of wood-cutting which is known as the black line, the characteristic of all work of the kind up to the time of Bewick. The black line, which is left in relief, could be done by any careful 'prentice hand working upon a prepared drawing, but in later wood-engraving there is "a combination of black lines (left on the surface) and white lines, incised, distinguishing the best modern work altogether from the only mechanical rendering of early times." This white line was adopted by Bewick, and it is in the production of it that the artistic power is shown. Linton says: "In the white line alone we are able to show the full capability of wood-engraving; in this alone we can fully earn the dis-

tinctive name of artists." Now Robert Langton was a student in the school of Bewick, and so subtly skilful in the production and combination of lines, white and black, and with such a delicate and appreciative sense of values in expression as to leave no doubt whatever regarding his claim to being an artist of the truest kind. Linton's advice to the aspiring engraver is this : " Above all things, as you would be an artist, worship seriously, and be faithful to the ideal." In the changing course of things it seems as if the special art to which that worship of the ideal was to be applied is destined to become a lost one. Process blocks, mechanically produced by the aid of photography, have worked mischief to wood engravers in book illustrating directions and others. Langton, however, was faithful to his art in his time, and one doubts if honester or more aspiring work of its kind, within its degree, was ever produced than that of this latest of artistic wood-engravers.

Though in the exercise of his profession he was, as a man of business, equally prepared to cut a block representing nothing of higher value than a shop-front in Market Street, or to illustrate a book like Ormerod's " Cheshire," yet his disposition was to the expression of the high conditions of his art, and one fancies that the graver would work with a more loving, if not a truer touch, when engaged in the delineation of things archæological, old churches, ancient urns, coins, seals, and other kindred subjects, but most certainly would the touch be sympathetic when engaged in the production of portraits, and especially those of old worthies of local repute, such as adorn the pages of the *Palatine Note-Book*.

His first appearance as an essayist in the Club was in October, 1878, and appropriately the subject was the history and practice of wood-engraving. It was an admirable paper, of course, for he knew what he was talking about.

In illustration of it he surrounded himself with a rich profusion of specimens of exceptional value and interest, notably among the collection was a series of Durer's woodcuts, formerly the property of Mr. Ruskin, and contributed by the essayist's friend, Mr. F. J. Shields, who had himself frequently provided drawings for Langton's graver to work upon.

This reference to Shields reminds one how that artist—whose art seems to have grown more solemnly impressive and more highly devotional in its aims with the succeeding years—provided Langton with some drawings to work upon, which disclose not only a sense of humour, but a kind of rollicking delight in it. The illustrations to Ormrod's "*Felley fro' Rachda'*" are of a kind perfectly suiting the occasion, but curiously in contrast with one's accepted impression of the artist. One is reminded here also that it was William Morton who produced those humorous sketches, so familiar to one in the old days, which, by the aid of Langton's graver, adorn the pages of Proctor's "*Barber's Shop*."

Though the artistic element in him was predominant, there was also a decided literary vein. The disposition of it was reminiscent, and the expression marked by simplicity, directness, and exactness, the style and the man being identical. He never made a careless statement—would no more do so than cut a careless line with his graver—and spared no pains whatever to verify his facts. The grandson of an Accountant-General of Her Majesty's Excise, he doubtless inherited this quality of exactness which became habitual in the exercise of his art. His contributions to the volumes of the Literary Club were not numerous; among the minor ones may be named a review of Reid's "*Life of Sydney Smith*," a memorial notice of William Hartley, and one relating to the identification of

"The Cheeryble Brothers" with the "Grant Brothers." His principal contribution, however, was a remarkable one. Of all authors Dickens was his supreme favourite. That humourist had no more loyal or loving disciple, and the attachment of the reader to the author was completely responsive and sympathetic. In an examination or cross-examination on Dickens, Langton would have come out easily first. The study of Dickens constituted a sort of literary passion. He had not only read and re-read him, and so committed him largely to memory, but had, in a sense, absorbed him. The days and scenes of his own childhood and youth formed a further attractive link. He had been at school at Rochester, and Dickens had lived near that old cathedral city, and had made large use of it in his novels, in "Pickwick," and especially in "Edwin Drood." What more fitting, therefore, than that it should occur to Langton to exercise his pen upon the subject and produce a paper on "Charles Dickens and Rochester?" But this alone would not suffice; the paper must be illustrated, and not only the pen, but the graver must do its share. The sketches were not to be from his own hand, for he had found a willing and sympathetic co-worker in his friend, William Hull. Accordingly, these kindred spirits, in loving companionship, went down to the old city, and the results of their labours, in this happy pilgrimage, make a delightfully luminous space in the Club's printed transactions. Langton was never happier than in describing, and reproducing pictorially, these scenes of his youth, and intertwining among them, as with a thread of gold, those associations, real and imaginative, which had been conferred upon them through the medium of the great novelist whom he loved and worshipped. The illustrations to this paper are numerous and admirable, the honours being equally divided between artist and engraver. One sketch, however,

among them remains unfinished—a story left half-told. Before it could be completed William Hull died, and, as Langton says in a postscript to the paper, the drawing of "Jasper's Gatehouse," relating to "Edwin Drood," remains an unfinished illustration of an unfinished tale.

In this connection it may be noted here that soon after William Hull's death, a paper on his life and work was read at a *conversazione* of the Club by Mr. Thomas Read Wilkinson, who, in illustration of his subject, exhibited, out of a collection of over one thousand possessed by himself, a series of one hundred and fifteen of Hull's drawings and sketches.

As coming events cast their shadows before, so this paper on "Charles Dickens and Rochester," which found favour far and wide—one edition of it being published by Messrs. Chapman and Hall—proved to be the prelude to the *magnum opus* of our friend, and in which work it was to a large extent merged. Writing on Dickens was to Langton an appetite which grew by what it fed on, and the success he had met with encouraged him to further effort, which resulted in "The Childhood and Youth of Charles Dickens." Before its publication he gave the Club, in a short paper, a foretaste of the coming book, and showed us some of the illustrations, of which, in the completed work, there are no less than seventy-six by his own hand. In this volume, a labour of love, as he tells us in its preface, and which attained a wide popularity, you have the epitome of the man as one knew him, his simplicity of nature, his gentle humour, his hero-worship, his literary tastes, his artistic powers, his indefatigable zeal, and his truthful exactness. The very notes of exclamation, scattered among the pages, and sometimes duplicated, when he announces some more than usually interesting discovery or coincidence, are in themselves eloquent. As an evidence of his minute par-

ticularity of description, take this example relating to the cedars at Gad's Hill : " The girth of the largest tree is, at the present time, 16 feet 2 inches below the branches, and it is 86 feet 4 inches from point to point of the largest branches. Each tree covers a circular area of about 80 feet diameter." One seems to see our friend at work as he carefully passes the recording tape over the trunks and branches. Read in the light of its authorship and as a literary tribute laid upon a shrine by a devout worshipper, Langton's book must ever have a claim upon the reverential regard and affection of those who knew him ; but, apart from this, it may be said that it has, on its merits, proved a valuable and interesting addition to the bibliography of Charles Dickens.

Before concluding this imperfect sketch I should like to introduce here a little scrap of manuscript which our friend has left behind, and which is interesting as throwing a sidelight upon a certain tenderness of feeling and a delicacy of expression in relation to matters of religious belief, which were among his many other amiable manifestations. It is called

#### BETTER THAN HIS CREED.

It was early in the forties, the time when what was known as Puseyism, or, as Sydney Smith called it, "Newmania," was beginning to make a noise in the world.

The scene was a pretty rural churchyard in Kent, and on a sultry afternoon in July I found a group of people assembled at the principal entrance of the churchyard. There was a single mourning coach, with a little coffin in it, and three poor women, one of whom was the mother of the little four-year-old girl waiting interment. There was the parish clerk, the sexton, the driver of the coach, and a clergyman, of whom it may be said that he was the rector of an adjoining parish, an advanced Puseyite, a stickler for the Rubrics, and, above all, a most generous and deservedly respected man. I noticed that trouble was expressed in the faces of all present, and in answer to my enquiries the clerk explained to me in a few words



that it had somehow transpired that the poor child now to be laid at rest had not been baptised, and that the vicar of the parish had very reluctantly declined to read the burial service over its poor remains. Of course the clergyman was legally within his right, and it should be specially mentioned here that the vicar was a genial, kind-hearted Christian gentleman, resembling in many ways (even to his name) Praed's well-known vicar, Gulielmus Brown.

Here was the difficulty, and the cause of the small gathering at the churchyard gate. During this brief explanation the before-mentioned rector stood apart communing with himself, and gently writing with his cane in the chalky dust of the wayside, reminding one, at least, of the lookers on (with all reverence be it spoken), of a somewhat similar and most touching incident described in the 8th chapter of St. John's Gospel.

After a brief pause the good rector, without speaking a word to the distressed mourners, turned to the parish clerk and said : " Evans, you know who I am ; I don't think Mr. Brown will in any way object—can you fetch me a surplice?" The parish clerk, nothing loth, immediately repaired to the vestry of the church ; the surplice was promptly forthcoming, then, giving the writer his hat and cane to hold, the rector put on the canonicals, and, placing himself at the head of the small procession, read, in a fine resonant voice—a voice that lingers with me yet, and as if he felt and believed the words he was saying, " I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord ; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die," and so on, most impressively to the end of the service. The funeral obsequies performed, and a few kindly words addressed to the grateful women, the rector resumed his hat and his walk, feeling, I should think, none the worse, but very much the better, for the fervid thanks and blessings of the three tearful mourners.

In the cultivation or recreative indulgence of his varied tastes Robert Langton became a member of the Anti-quarian Society, an Associate of the Manchester Academy of Fine Arts, and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. I knew him best as an honoured member of our Club, who shared in the honours which it confers. He was long a member of the Council, was afterwards raised to the

rank of Vice-President, and remained associated with us in an honorary connection up to the time of his death. It is about six years since, in failing health, he retired to the south of England, and it is suggestive of the mutability of things that to many of the present members of the Club he may be comparatively unknown. To such, it is hoped, some little insight into his character may have been given by these poor words, which, like a spray of rosemary laid upon a grave, have been set down

In memory  
Of that delightful fragrance which was once  
From his mild manners quietly exhaled.





## NOTES ON RUSKIN'S "ELEMENTS OF DRAWING."\*

BY GEORGE MILNER.

THE "Elements of Drawing" was published in 1857.

It was the result of Ruskin's association with Maurice and others as a teacher in the Working Men's College. The five years which he gave to this enterprise were comparatively happy and fruitful, for they gave him what he needed—practical work and the opportunity of contact with the real working man. The period which immediately followed was one of storm and stress, and the wild breaking up of long cherished ideals. The book takes a familiar, epistolary form, and consists of a preface, three long letters and an appendix. It contains some excellent elementary lessons, but the greater portion would prove confusing to a beginner, though every word of it is valuable to an advanced and intelligent student. Of course, the writer's usual discursiveness leads him to speak of many things besides elementary drawing, but the wise reader will take what he can get with thankfulness, and not trouble himself with the consideration of how much is apposite and how much extraneous.

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\* This Paper was one, among others, read at a "Ruskin Night," at the Manchester Literary Club, held during the first half of its 1900-1 session. Some of the remaining papers will be printed as occasion serves.

In the preface will be found, succinctly stated, that favourite dictum of Ruskin's which has excited much discussion—namely, that the excellence of an artist as such depends wholly on refinement of perception, and that there is only one rule respecting art which is without exception—"that all great art is delicate." I think in later life he modified this statement. But in the main it is true, and is really only a corollary of another of his leading ideas, that sincerity in the artist is the one thing to be demanded. Sincerity in life, as well as in art, was indeed to him all in all. His literary activities were so numerous, and his teaching so various and so continually under process of change and development, that I have always found it impossible to reduce them to any other common term than this of sincerity. Follow him, however, where you will, and you will find that, except when he is obviously jesting, or flinging paradoxes about as a juggler flings the balls around his head, this test of sincerity will uniformly apply, and I think no other will. With the final sentence of his preface I heartily concur, "The best answerer of questions is perseverance, and the best drawing-masters are the woods and hills."

In the second letter, that on "Sketching from Nature," great stress is wisely laid upon getting, first of all, the leading lines of a subject. In characteristic terminology he calls them "vital" lines, "fateful," and even "awful" lines. No teaching can be sounder than this, and it applies to other subjects besides drawing. The true way to learn anything is to get the leading lines clearly in your mind before you enter upon details. In criticising the shortcomings of Harding as a draughtsman he makes this fertile observation, which the skilled artist should reverently consider: "The true drawing of detail is for evermore impossible to a hand which has contracted a habit of execution." In

the same letter a piece of advice, delightfully expressed, is given to the amateur in drawing.

But though you cannot produce finished coloured drawings of any value, you may give yourself much pleasure, and be of great use to other people, by occasionally sketching with a view to colour only; and preserving distinct statements of certain colour facts—as that the harvest-moon at rising was of such and such a red, and surrounded by clouds of such and such a rosy grey; that the mountains at evening were in truth so deep in purple; and the waves by the boat's side were indeed of that incredible green. This only, observe, if you have an eye for colour; but you may presume that you have this, if you enjoy colour.

In enforcing the truth that in a great picture every line and colour is so arranged as to advantage the rest, he illustrates it by saying:

Similarly in a great poem, each word and thought enhances the value of those which precede and follow it; and every syllable has a loveliness which depends not so much on its abstract sound as on its position. Look at the same word in a dictionary and you will hardly recognise it.

In any book of Ruskin's we may be sure that, whatever the specific subject may be, we shall get incidentally two things—felicities of style, and what has been called criticism of life. The whole frame and temper of his mind make this inevitable, and the "Elements of Drawing" is happily no exception to this rule. Let me take an example or two. And, first of style:

The clouds will not wait while we copy their heaps or clefts; the shadows will escape from us as we try to shape them, each, in its stealthy minute march, still leaving light where its tremulous edge had rested before, and involving in eclipse objects that had seemed safe from its influence; and instead of the small clusters of leaves which we could reckon point by point, embarrassing enough even though numerable, we have now leaves as little to be counted as the sands of the sea, and restless, perhaps, as its foam.

The passage already quoted on amateur work is another instance, and at the close of the letter on "Colour and Composition" there is a detailed description of the village

of Heysham as it appears in Turner's drawing, which is a model of descriptive art, as clear as language can ever be—minute, without being tedious, and expanded without prolixity. It is too long for quotation, occupying five or six pages, but the student who wants to learn how to write good English without those purple patches which sometimes disfigure Mr. Ruskin's earlier work, may profitably give a long time to its consideration. Of criticism of life there are many examples. Take this on "Great Men": "Now remember, nothing distinguishes great men from inferior men more than their *always*, whether in life or in art, *knowing the way things are going*." The italics are Mr. Ruskin's own.

In a passage where he is discussing the individual character and liberty of separate leaves, he characteristically breaks off into a dissertation on the evils of a society where men are subject to no government, and are actuated by no ruling principle, and that in which men might be so oppressed into assimilation as to lose individual hope and character—"a society in which no man could help another, since none would be feebler than himself; no man admire another, since none would be stronger than himself; no man be grateful to another, since by none could he be relieved; no man reverence another, since by none he could be instructed."

Mr. Ruskin closes his last letter with some noble words on travel, and the way to observe nature, to which I always recur with singular pleasure and much delightful reminiscence. The reader who wishes to refer to them will find them on pages 331-2-3.

I must not neglect to draw attention to the admirable wood-engravings with which the volume is illustrated. To some, indeed, these may form the chief attraction. They are all from Mr. Ruskin's own sketches, either from nature

or from pictures. Many of the simplest drawings of leaves and of the branches of trees are exquisite, but the gems of the book are the three reproductions in outline from Turner's picture of the Bridge at Coblenz on pages 253, 268, and 271. I have looked at the first of these for many hours, simple as it is, and ever with more wonder, at the beauty and harmony, perfect though intricate, of Turner's composition.

The "Appendix" might well have occupied more space than that given to the body of the book. Having in mind his pupils at the Working Men's College, he seeks to give them advice as to what pictures and what books they should admire. He tells them which painters are, in his opinion, always right, which are sometimes right and sometimes wrong, and which are base and deserving of universal reprobation. In later life, as was to be expected, he somewhat modified these lists, but, as they stand in this volume, they are useful to any discerning student. He then connects his observations on art with what he has to say on literature by affirming that, while he has known men with a pure taste in literature and a false taste in art, he has never known any who, having a false taste in books, had a true taste in pictures. With regard to the indisputably great writers, he may be safely followed.—Homer, Plato, Æschylus, Herodotus, Dante, Shakespeare, and Spenser—but in the second class he displays some curious and uncritical preferences, and some equally uncritical antipathies. His estimate of Coventry Patmore's "Angel in the House" was always exaggerated, and his opinion that Mrs. Browning's "Aurora Leigh" is "the greatest poem which the century has produced in any language" is, to say the least, perplexing. Still worse is his sweeping and unqualified condemnation of Coleridge as "sickly and useless," and of Shelley as "shallow and verbose." His note on Carlyle

is characteristic. "He is not a writer for 'beginners,' because his teaching, though to some of us vitally necessary, may to others be hurtful. If you understand and like him, read him; if he offends you, you are not yet ready for him, and perhaps may never be so; at all events give him up, as you would sea-bathing if you found it hurt you, till you are stronger." For myself, I hazard the opinion that, on the whole, Carlyle's influence on Ruskin was injurious. Many of the things which even the warmest admirers of Ruskin regret were not native to his own character, but superinduced by the dominating personality of Carlyle.

Finally, let me say that it is only necessary to be able to separate the chaff from the good grain to make Ruskin of immense value to us as an exponent of nature and of life. We cannot get from him consistency and an ordered sequence of ideas, but we can get noble thoughts, inspiration, and an incentive to noble deeds, the sincere love of beauty, and faith in "admiration, love, and hope" as a rule of life. He is not a guide or a mentor, but a prophet crying in the wilderness to a generation steeped, as he believed, in criminal selfishness, and debased by a soulless and materialistic philosophy. George Eliot's admirable words sum up the whole matter. What impressed her in Ruskin were: "The grand doctrines of truth and sincerity in art, and of the nobleness and solemnity of our human life."







## AN OLD LANCASHIRE VILLAGE.

BY ARTHUR W. FOX.

Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,  
Seats of my youth, which every sport could please.

—Goldsmith.

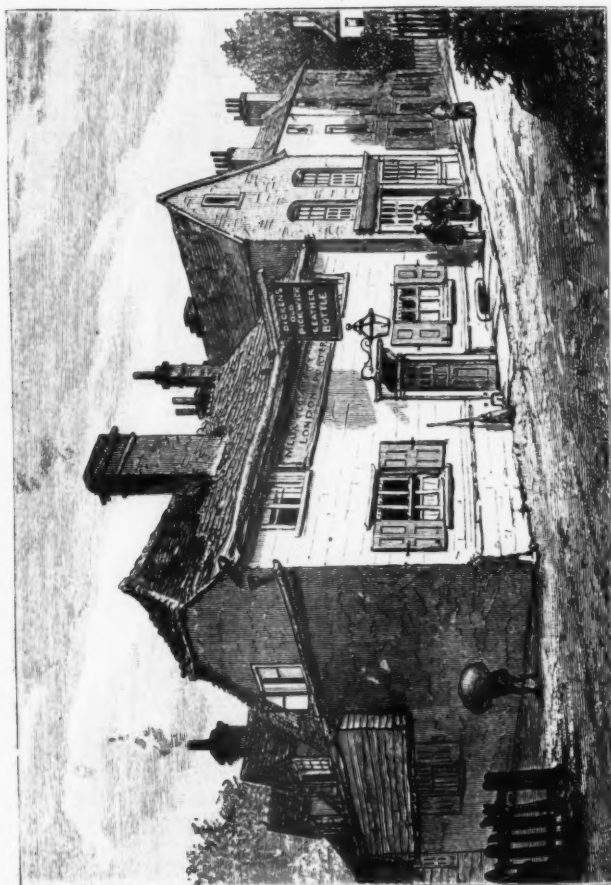
THE VILLAGE of Barnton lies on the high road between the larger village of Beauchamp and the "ancient and loyal borough" of Warley, at the central spot of the great South Lancashire coalfield. It was not originally a mining village, but the peaceful abode of a hardy and keen-witted race of hand-loom weavers, farmers, smithymen, small traders, and inn-keepers. At the upper end of the hamlet stands, and has stood for two hundred years, the old Nonconformist Chapel, in the midst of a picturesque graveyard, studded with time-worn stones and daisied mounds—those simplest memorials of the lowly dead. Sometimes the loving hand of the present strews these relics of the past with posies of mindful love; but most of the sleepers beneath the green sod have long faded from the memory of the living. The Chapel bell is said to have been a Catholic bell, duly consecrated with holy water and its kindred accessories. Now it summons to worship a stalwart band of hard-headed Nonconformists, whose sympathies have not a trace of the mysteries of Rome. The Chapel itself has always been popular with those young lovers who desire to recover their senses by the simple process of wedlock. For many years it has been familiarly known as "Barnton pairing-place," a nickname

which speaks for itself. Doubtless the number of marriages celebrated within its walls was increased by the kindness of the minister, who declined to take a fee "for making people happy," a forbearance much appreciated by the frugal minds of the rustics. Still a host of tender associations gathered round the old place. Through nearly seven generations its worshippers have fought under the flag of civil and religious liberty, and their descendants have survived to rejoice in the victory won after a long and stubborn battle. Many sturdy warriors are laid in the graveyard, where the din of the conflict sounds no longer in their ears, but the result of their faithful service remains, and others "have entered into their labours."

Close to the venerable building is one of the two grocers' shops, which originally supplied the inhabitants with an agreeable combination of necessities, and such modest luxuries as Spanish juice, mint-drops, more or less over-boiled oranges, a nauseous compound known as "savoury duck," which should surely have been called "savoury pluck," black puddings, and the like. The presiding genius of this emporium of pungent gossip and household requirements was Sally o' Tims, or Sarah, the wife of Timothy. She was a tall, good-looking Lancashire woman, whose husband was a prosperous and busy chain-maker. She was a witty woman, richly endowed with that peculiarly Lancashire humour which perceives and ruthlessly points out their defects to neighbours of every kind. Her shop was small, but it overflowed with a heterogeneous assortment of articles of usefulness and beauty. There were matter-of-fact groceries, and shelves burdened with long rows of green canisters containing tea of various degrees of strength, coffee, golden syrup, black treacle, and other "good things more than tongue can tell." There were hidden stores of sugar, tins of health-giving but dispiriting







*Woodcut by Tansley from Drawing by Hall.*

THE LEATHER BOTTLE, COBHAM.



dandelion-coffee, boxes of healing and griping pills, sweets whose chronic "sweating sickness" rendered them loth to leave their native bottles, hair-pins and pins of a more pointed kind, brushes of every order from the sturdy yard-broom to the silken hair-arranger dear to ladies, combs of solemn dignity and well-preserved teeth, highly-coloured if elementary articles of drapery, rosy-cheeked apples, sticky mountains of dates, liquorice-root, biscuits and many other things, which it would take an auctioneer's minuteness to fitly particularise.

A low partition kept the knavish fingers of children from handling the seductions of the window. The counter was formed in the shape of a huge capital L, terminating in a big pair of scales, which were alternately used to weigh flour and potatoes. The purchasers were little disturbed by so unpromising a combination of services, and they brought a bag for the flour demanded by the shrill tongue of Sally. In addition to these mightier weighing-machines the counter was adorned with a pair of smaller brass scales, the pride of Sally's heart, as their superfine polish betrayed. Near these scales stood, or rather rolled, the round receptacle with its sharp knife and tail of string, which excited the wonder of the youth of the neighbourhood, as to how the string ever got inside. Crowded as the shop was with solid and quasi-fluid contents, it was a miracle of orderly neatness, and only the floor where the customers stood had a speck of dust. How Sally contrived to attain to such a pitch of cleanliness was a secret best known to herself; perhaps, like most good women, she could see dust without spectacles, long after she had adopted those invaluable aids to reading.

One afternoon, when a north-east wind was blowing with penetrative power and snow was falling thick and fast, the usual company of gossips and buyers was filling the

shop with a mixture of womankind and eloquence. It was surprising how long these worthy daughters of Eve lingered over their purchases to hear the latest news, and to add their own mite of embellishment to sufficiently exaggerated tales. Indeed the thoughtful mind could scarcely fail to entertain alarming conjectures as to the conjunction of over-curious children with fire. Into the midst of the company a poor man entered. His cheeks were gaunt, and their native paleness was just flushed with the wind. His garments seemed designed rather to reveal his poverty than to conceal his nakedness, and how the tattered rags contrived to hold together was a mystery to every superficial observer. He had no coat, and what was left of his waistcoat was fastened across his chest by one button, a piece of string, a bootlace, and a large black pin evidently picked up in his wanderings. Almost breathless with cold and hunger, he gasped out: "Eh, missis, gie me a bit; I'm welly clemmed to death." Sally stopped abruptly in the midst of a delicious morsel of scandal, and eyeing the melancholy wretch from top to toe with a whimsical, but kindly pity, she exclaimed: "Ay God bless thy soul, I will gie thee a bit, for it's not for th' lack o' ventilation 'at thou'rt clemmin'."

Such was Sally o' Tim's, a woman of a shrewd head and a sharp tongue, but a kind heart. If she had a habit of quarrelling with her best friends, she was always ready to be reconciled; and of what use are friends if we may not sharpen our temper on them sometimes? She had much to endure in her life, and she was not old when she passed away. She sleeps in her grave now, and but few of her witty sayings are remembered. Her burden in life was heavy, but she bore it without flinching and with little complaint, and now her anxious heart is at peace.

On the other side of the Chapel stood the Barnton Hotel,



as it was proudly called, though the old English name of inn would have been its more fitting designation. It is doubtful whether anyone ever stayed the night there; but it had a good situation and many diurnal supporters, who had the bad habit of returning home once a week at least in a too-pronounced state of civilisation. Its chief attraction was a capital bowling green, whereon the heated players were wont to cool their excitement in mighty pots of ale. Those who have never played at bowls little suspect its thrilling anxieties and intensity of interest. But let them once try their hand and their temper, and they will own that kings and noblemen had some reason in keeping its mysteries to themselves. At all events, in James I.'s "Declaration of Sports" the game of bowls, in company with the no less exciting pursuits of bull and bear baiting, was by name forbidden to the common people. Perhaps the sapient King desired to confine the exhilarating practice of swearing, which is induced by these sports, to royal personages, the clergy, the nobility, and gentry of the land. In Barnton, however, all alike engaged in the delightful diversion to the joint benefit of their patience and the pocket of the willing landlord.

Here the best of the village botanical societies held its weekly meetings, and discussed weeds of more kinds than one to the accompaniment of vegetable, not to say intoxicating cordials. The native botanists were keen alike in the knowledge of classification and of the more abstruse elements of their favourite science. Their Latin might have a rather doggish sound, but they knew their subject and rejoiced in their knowledge. Some of them have been known to trudge a ten-mile's journey and back to add some rarer species to their herbarium; while some of them culled medicinal herbs, and brewed therefrom decoctions sufficiently nauseous to put the devil himself to flight.

Sometimes the older botanists told stories of bygone folklore to the obvious contempt of the younger and less credulous collectors. One example may suffice. There is a curious tradition of the *Osmunda regalis*, that it only casts its seed on St. John's Eve, or midsummer night. On this occasion angels of the "lower classes" come from below, and the seeds themselves shoot forth in all directions like dancing sparks. He who is fortunate enough to win one of these, caught in a peculiar fashion, can henceforth walk unseen. The superstition itself may possibly have arisen from the fact that when the fern has cast its seed the fertile frond withers with striking quickness. This is not "the gift of the fern-seed," which John Falstaff desires, and which refers to the seed of the bracken.

Be the origin what it may, a man of much imagination and succulent habits had taken to himself an eloquent wife, who was fond of exercising her tongue to point out his faults, and her wrists at the end of a broom-handle to impress the moral of her argument. This unworthy worthy at one of the meetings of the Botanical Society, heard the aforesaid legend, and determined to profit by it. One midsummer night, being "a bit forarder," he provided himself with the needful twelve tin tart-moulds and sallied forth with as much directness as his wavering limbs could compass to Waterton Moss, where the fern then grew in great abundance. He reached his destination just as the old Church clock was striking twelve. Here he caught sight of the dusky angels of a nether clime, and of the seed shooting forth in its diabolical curves. His terror rose, and had he not been borne up with something stronger than water he would surely have taken to his heels. As it was, he stood as steadily as his lower limbs would permit, and held his pile of tins, which jingled in his shaky hands. To his great joy one seed fell on the topmost tin and went through

the rest, till it stopped at the twelfth. Having thus obtained his heart's desire, he staggered off home, describing curves unknown to geometry with his tottering legs, and accompanied by the mocking laughter of the fiends.

But his troubles had only begun. In the first place "walking just then wasn't very convenient," and it took him long to reach home with his distance-doubling steps. When he arrived at the door of his cottage his beloved met him with the accustomed broom-handle. To her speechless astonishment she saw her good man's clothes wobbling about with nothing inside them. The unlucky victim had forgotten that the mystic seed had no power over things of mortal make, and he had laid up for himself the smart of bitter repentance. His wife knew the clothes at once. There was a patch on the coat, which she had only put on that morning, and she could not mistake those mosaic corduroys, which had scarcely a visible cord of the original left. She was not merely a subtle linguist, but endowed with a strong portion of commonsense. When the tremulous garments staggered into the kitchen containing their invisible owner, she did not sit down on the floor and faint. Far from it, she set her candle down on the dresser, and before her lord and master could sit down she caught up her broom with both hands, and plied it with force and speed, exclaiming in her most persuasive tones: "Come to, thou gawmless gomeril; come to, wilt 'ou, or I'll break thy back." It is needless to add that he did "come to" with uncommon speed, for who could resist the pleading tones of a wife under such interesting circumstances? Some sceptics will set down this story to the ramblings of a drunken dream. To their confusion, be it said, that the man told the tale himself, with pictorial embroidery at each repetition, and surely he ought to know.

Leaving the local botanists to pursue their examination

of weeds and fluids, the wayfarer, if he proceed down the high road, will come to a little brook crossed by a stone bridge and a plank leading to a pleasant field-path. Once the stream flowed over instead of under the road, and in olden days coaches splashed through its limpid waters on their way to Warley. Perhaps a toll was taken in the past for the use of the foot-bridge, which has long since disappeared, and the ancient name of Perry Bridge may have been corrupted into Penny Bridge in commemoration of some such bygone imposition. To-day miners, who have nothing better to do, will throw sticks into the brook on one side of the bridge, and lay bets on the one which will first emerge on the other side.

Not far along the road there once stood a white-washed cottage with the usual weaving-shed, wherein a family had lived for nearly two centuries. Sturdy Nonconformists were these. On one occasion the neighbouring rector made a parochial visitation to the tenant, who held him in a long and strong argument. "But, my good man, have you got a Bible in the house," he asked. "We'n piece o' one," replied the unmanageable elder.

Though an awkward controversialist, who possessed the true Lancashire man's capacity of putting everyone but himself in the wrong, the old man had a nice taste in gardening. His two small patches of land contained many old-fashioned rarities, which are never seen in these days of insane and inartistic bedding-out. Near the cottage door grew the queen of the garden, a white moss-rose bush, which in some seasons was covered with blossoms of delicate beauty. A climbing rose and a trailing honeysuckle were the maids of honour to the queen of the flowers. In summer evenings they were haunted by an elfin cloud of night-moths, which shone like patches of living gossamer in the dimness of twilight. There was, moreover, that singu-

lar apple-tree, the fruit of which is known as the "Ten Commandments," and which derives its name from the fact that the apple divides naturally into ten sections, popularly termed "quarters." The well was in one corner of the garden, and shaded by what the gardener would have called "damsel-trees," not out of compliment to their sex, but to fulfil the rigours of Grimm's Law. The rest of the space was parcelled out into neatly kept beds of flowers and vegetables curiously blended. Onions, those mildly odorous herbs ranged next to standard roses, and broad beans overshadowed long beds of Sweet Williams.

His son, who succeeded him, scorned such vulgarities as "annuals," with the exception of the Virginian Stock, which lifted its impoverished-looking blooms from a long border, and looked as if it had grown pale with regret for its sunnier native land. In spring, glistening snowdrops and crocuses, gay with violet and gold, pale daffodils and glorious polyanthuses, bloomed with the peculiar beauty of spring flowers. A small rockery was covered with ladies' pin-cushion, white-rock, love-in-a-mist, and yellow and purple corydalis. In summer a blaze of perennials succeeded one another in unfailing order, and shone amid a host of vegetables. Scarlet-runners climbed over the hedge, sorely tempting the inquisitive minds and acquisitive fingers of small boys. Rows of peas bore luxuriant crops, and the hedges all around were cut as hedges ought to be cut. They were so thick and shady that birds undisturbed built their nests in the thorny recesses, nor could the aforesaid small boys, who take a special interest in the growth of apples and similar unripe objects of acid temptation, work their way through the tough twigs to the Paradise within. The garden was a veritable Eden in miniature, whose old-fashioned beauties far surpassed the more gorgeous splendours of modern horticulture. The cottage and its gay

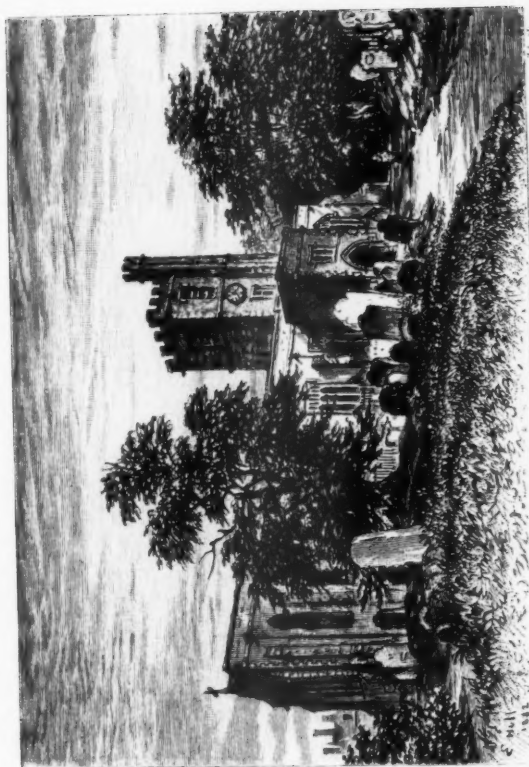
mantle of leaves and flowers are gone now ; only a deeper shade of green in the corner of a field marks the place where once it stood. But clustering memories are gathered about the spot, and fancy still peoples the green grass with the forms of those who have long left the earth.

Winding to the right, a lane led from the cottage to an old and substantial house surrounded by a collection of smithies, from which a cheerful clanking was wont to sound, while the bellows whistled to the fire, and the fire roared up the chimney in answer. Here lived the principal man of the village with his two sisters, all unmarried, though singularly handsome and greatly beloved by their workpeople and by the rest of the villagers. The owner farmed a few fields, each of which had its especial name. Between the croft and the longlea was a circular pond which had been well stocked with fish, and which had its contingent of mighty eels to boot. The brown and green oval leaves of the pond-weed covered the greater part of the clear water, and alders and whitethorns grew around wherein ousels, thrushes, and sometimes green linnets, built their nests. But there was room enough for the skilled angler to cast his line into the pond, and his patience was seldom disappointed. Once a gentleman, equipped with the best tackle of the famous Ogden for the degraded art of "bottom-fishing," threw his line into the longlea pit to tempt one of the giant carp to take his bait. He had spent much on his tackle, but money could not buy him skill. The only aquatic creature which heeded his efforts was an amphibious female newt, whose curiosity proved her ruin. Close to the full-dress sportsman sat little Jimmie, a wary, witty, and wiry old nan, who, with a stout hazel twig and an inferior line, pulled out one great carp after another, to the dudgeon of his better-furnished rival. He had studied the taste of his victims, and provided them with









Woodcut by Langdon from Engraving by Hall.

COBHAM CHURCH, KENT.



the irresistible attraction of a set of lively grubs from a wasp's nest. Whether the well-equipped angler would have braved the adventure of taking such a nest may well be doubted. But Jimmie, who had faced the dangers of a thousand stings, had his well-earned reward.

The longlea pit has quite a history of its own; many a poacher paid it nightly, and usually unsuccessful, visits "by the pale light of the moon." On one occasion a band of poachers attempted in vain to net the pit. They tugged and hauled, and tugged and hauled again. But the sole reward of their hard labour was a large quantity of weeds and one puny perch. They did achieve one desirable object, though that was far from their intention—they cleared out many hindrances to the legitimate angler. Their revenge was as mean as their conduct was unsportsmanlike. They forced their way into the neighbouring garden, and smashed every stick of a flourishing row of celery.

The old house was solid and picturesque. It was shaded by a fine and fruitful jargonelle pear tree, and one of boyhood's delightful occupations was to sit on the roof in sunny August gathering the luscious fruit and eating, until it was a positive pain to climb down the ladder. Those who have never eaten a jargonelle gathered when its fragrant and mellow cheeks are warm with the autumn sun have never tasted one of life's keenest flavours. The warehouse and office, for it was both, was shaded by a green Virginian creeper, which in the fall of the year seemed blushing betimes for its coming nakedness. Behind the house, at the back door, stood the dog-kennel, with its fierce tenant, overshadowed by a bower of roses, which daintily concealed the coal-place on the other side. Near by was a giant gold-nep pear tree, which bore bushels of round, yellow, juicy pears, the favourites of unfriendly wasps, which fought fiercely with the anxious and delicately balanced gatherer.

Not far off, beneath a thicket of white snowballs, purple lilac and yellow laburnum, gleamed a romantic wicket-gate leading to the garden, where many a tale of love had been told in the past. The path lay under the darkling arch of two huge rhododendrons, which shone gaily in the early summer of their bloom. The garden itself had a choice selection of roses of every hue; and the neat frame of scarlet runners, the trim beds of vegetables, the odour of many flowers, the fine barberry, the sombre box, the majestic pink hawthorn, the general order in disorder and the unrestrained beauty of its arrangement formed a picture once seen never to be forgotten.

The two ladies were never without their parrot, which had a sense of humour and a love of mischief only exceeded by the inventive faculty of boys. The bird was often freed from its cage, when it would take the opportunity of parading the floor, and, with extreme nicety and secrecy, snipping the laces of the boots of unconscious guests. Once for all its wonted wisdom this sage bird flew away. She was found seated on the top of a distant tree with a boy at the foot, who naively remarked: "Eh, sithee, a pigeon wi' a red tail." The unwillingness which Pollie showed to quit her lofty perch, and the fierceness with which she did battle with the man who was bold enough to climb up to her, presented a scene worthy of an epic poet. At last she did come down, and was never known to so far commit herself again. When in the possession of a previous owner, she had been indiscreetly taken to chapel, and when the choir, with its wonted heartiness, "gave tongue" to the stirring tune of Lydia, her feelings were evidently sorely tried. From under her mistress's cloak she was heard to say "Damn!" with an emphasis which quite startled the congregation, who could not see from whence the unhallowed sound proceeded.

The village had its ghosts, of which it was unreasonably proud, and quite as unreasonably frightened. On a summer evening one of the ladies was coming home, when she saw a black mass, like the mud near a duck-pond. In it were prints like those of a horse-shoe, and slowly it rolled over and over the dusty road, till it disappeared in the neighbouring ditch. She was astonished at so unusual a sight, and hastened home with some alarm. What the phenomenon was cannot now be ascertained. Some of the more credulous kind set it down to a ghostly visitation, while a more rationalistic mind affirmed that the apparition was nothing more than a troop of wandering eels on its way from one pit to another. However that may be, there were two undoubted and more terrible ghosts, which no one had seen, but in which all the older people believed with tenacious credulity. A field-path made at an early date to cut off a corner of the road was the scene of the nightly walk of a shadowy funeral procession, which moved slowly through the fields when the clock struck twelve. The rustic mind never decided the question whether the ghostly visitants buried a new ghost every night in the ghost of a grave, dug with the ghost of a spade by the ghost of a sexton; and ghosts are so unaccountable that it is unwise to offer an opinion upon so subtle a problem. This much is certain, that few of the villagers were bold enough to cross those fields at midnight, and none of them had been known to question the shadowy mourners as to what they did there.

The other ghost was of a similar kind, but less terrible, inasmuch as it was only a single person. There was a well at the end of a path bordered by two hedges, which led from the high road. Here a mystic female figure, which had been seen as early as twilight, glided into the well, and, after making as if she would draw water, disappeared like a flash of lightning. It cannot be denied that

she served the useful purpose of compelling her more substantial sisters to draw water in seasonable time to escape the horror of seeing her. That a woman was murdered here is probable; that her ghost was really seen is less likely, though it was an awful heresy to express any doubt on the subject. The proper name of the spring was Skelton Well, which had been corrupted to Skeleton Well. But whether the name was the origin of the ghost, or the ghost godmother of the name, let those who love psychic research decide.

At the other end of Barnton was a row of houses, the property of a worthy man, who combined the trades of grocery and nail-making, though he did not mix the two commodities. At this time he was dead, and his widow added to her substance by keeping a little farm, the chief products of which were milk and eggs. Old Mally was endowed with great shrewdness and no little acidity of tongue. She was a lover of fresh air, and in extreme old age she would never have the kitchen door shut. At one time another old woman lived with her for a brief period, until the two hatched a very pretty quarrel. Old Sally was as sweet as her hostess, and possessed a voice of no mean strength, which was musical beyond all other sounds in her ears. On a December day, when the wind was as keen as the tempers of the old women, she asked Mally's son Marton to shut the door, whereupon his mother savagely exclaimed: "Do if thou dare; I've niver hed th' dur tined for fifty years afore nine o'clock, an' I'm noan goin' to begin now for a great starven thing like that!" The two old dames may have been handsome enough in their youth, but in their age they closely resembled a pair of witches. One evening they were sitting by the fire, which old Mally began to stir, when old Sally thus addressed her: "Yo' shouldn't perk th' fire; a' th' dust keeps

flyin' on to me." "Ay, it iver flies to th' prattiest," was the crushing retort. It was alike amusing and informing to hear old Mally characterising her neighbours with more accuracy than charity. She would take each in turn with complete impartiality, accompanying her comments with puffs from a mulatto clay pipe, which it was her habit to store on the top of the oven.

Marton inherited much of his mother's descriptive skill, with a large share of her biting humour. He was that awkward kind of man, who was wont to annihilate the soaked wayfarer who was unwise enough to remark, "It's wet to-day, Marton," with the crushing rejoinder, "Ay, it's this rain as is doin' it." Once, when he met a poor dragged wretch, whose back had been a water-conductor, he sententiously observed, "It's bad dthryin' out to-day." At the end of one of the fields, which he tenanted from the parsonage, was a brickcroft, which contained several clay-pits, wherein the masculine youth of the neighbourhood

Its youthful limbs was wont to lave  
In the semi-transparent wave.

Marton had all a proprietor's objection to their instinct of unlawful cleanliness, and one afternoon, when the parson with his two sons was looking over the hedge, they espied the worthy man hopping along—he had one leg shorter than the other—almost hidden beneath a great armful of miscellaneous clothing. Jackets, trousers, shirts, stockings, collars, and the rest loaded one arm, while in the other hand he carried a dozen pairs of clogs and boots slung on a pikel. A mischievous smile pervaded his face as he said in his quiet voice, "I doubt they winnot come bathin' their again in a hurry." That afternoon twelve lads of various sizes, clad in a tight-fitting garment of nakedness, stole home like frightened aborigines, and the village was gravely scandalised by so improper a display of "the

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human form divine." What was their fate when they reached home need not be described. They were in too tempting a condition to escape warming, in the expressive language of the country folk. Whether they ever again sought the scene of their undoing remains unknown; but the practical joke, which told so heavily against them, was long remembered, though never repeated in the village.

Such was Marton, Lancashire to the core, and compact of contrariety, who had the peculiar faculty of knowing what would shock his hearers most, and who took a genuine delight in saying "the accursed thing" in the most offensive manner. He was himself endowed with what phrenological wiseacres call a 'large organ of veneration,' but his hatred of cant made him hide his real feelings under a mask of irreverence. When he was manager of the Co-operative Store, he had to serve a woman of most rigid orthodoxy, and her continual harping upon themes which can but be profaned by common talk irritated him beyond endurance. With a mocking smile he began to discuss the popular ideas of heaven, and came to an end with the following striking peroration: "Eh, missis, when I go up'ards an' get my white short on an' my gowd trumpet, I'll blow till I brast th' roof o' heaven off." The horror seated upon the worthy woman's grave countenance can be more easily imagined than described, and Marton's mischievous smile added fury to her indignation. Still she was silenced, as her husband said, "for th' fust time sin' 'e'd known 'er." Yet, for all such outbursts of quaint levity, Marton was a true-hearted and honest man. He is gone to his rest now, after years of terrible suffering patiently borne, and his bright sallies are sorely missed in Barnton.

Marton's smithy was worked by three smiths of various degrees of skill and sobriety. One, who happened to be the tallest was known as "Long Tom," and he represented



the positive degree, being rarely overtaken in his cups. The comparative was unworthily represented by a little man, "whose Christian name was John," but who had more semblance of activity than real desire for work, and who was accordingly denominated "Motion." The third, who may, for the sake of brevity, like the Bishop of Runtifoo, be called Peter, was the representative of the superlative degree of inebriety. When he was a boy his father sent him to draw a jug of beer from the barrel, which stood on a slab in the scullery. The family waited, and no Peter appeared. His father smoked a pipe to the dregs, and still no Peter, nor, what was worse, any beer. At last his patience wore out, and he went to seek the missing cup-bearer, whom he found lying drunk on the floor, with the tap turned on and the beer flowing into his mouth. Peter was a good workman when he was sober. But he had two faults—a decided tendency to intoxication and a constitutional objection to work, which interfered with his success in life. How he contrived to keep body and soul together is a secret best known to himself, but live he did, and in his own fashion "take his ease in his inn" until he was kicked out. These three graces of the smithy occupied their leisure in making nails, and they usually found time for an inspiring bit of gossip, which kept time to the strokes of their hammers.

Next to the smithy, and parted therefrom by an aged barn bearing the date of 1702 stood, in its own garden, the stuccoed, solid-looking parsonage, which had braved the storms of one hundred and fifty winters. Its old-fashioned, five-barred gate, with the smaller wicket, its row of green railings, through which could be seen a rockery, flanked on either side by a tall acacia, its fine beeches and yellow laburnums, its pretty garden encircling a rhododendron-girdled sun-dial, its trim summer-house, its ample store of

fruit and flowers, presented a peaceful picture to the passer-by who was tall enough to peep over the hedge. Here a long line of faithful ministers had lived, and each had left some memento of his presence in the garden, and some tradition in the minds of the villagers. Some had been eloquent in the pulpit, some had been careful pastors, while all had been earnest men, who swayed their stubborn flock with a somewhat arbitrary severity. They had taken an interest in the garden, and most had added something rare or useful to its collection of the curiosities of vegetation. Their means were narrow, but their hearts were large, and in good or evil fortune they held up their heads and played no mean part in the life of the village. Some of them sleep in distant places, some are laid in the old graveyard, where timeworn slabs preserve the simple record of their faithful lives.

Almost opposite to the parsonage was a little white cottage, near what was called the "four-footed cross," beneath which the stocks once stood to wean the drunken from their bad habits. Here lived an ancient man, who was a noted cow-doctor. Once the neighbouring baronet's lady sought his counsel in dire extremity. She imagined that her pet spaniel was dying, as, indeed, he was—of over-feeding. Old Jerry insisted that the pampered menial should be left entirely under his care for a fortnight, and reluctantly the honourable woman went her way with many searchings of heart. He was much relieved by her departure, and began to talk to the canine Falstaff in a manner to which though little accustomed, it rose with wonderful alacrity. At tea-time, when the dog was expecting its wonted saucer of cream and its delicately browned cutlet, the old man took down from a dusty shelf a dry bit of jannock and set it before the saucy creature, at which it turned up its nose with a saucy snuff. "Varry weel," he said, "thou mun

clemm till thou does." He carried out his threat in its entirety, and left the dog to starve, until it was glad to eat the solid and unsavoury morsel. When the noble lady came back after a fortnight of misery, she received her favourite reduced in bulk and restored to health. She would fain have learned the secret of the cure, but old Jerry's lips were sealed, and the dog was dumb, and she was forced to go away no richer in knowledge and a little poorer by the cow doctor's fee.

At the next cottage lived a venerable cow-keeper, a man of much personal attraction, who to his ninetieth year bared his bosom to the wintry elements, and scorned alike an overcoat and the buttons of his waistcoat. One chill day the minister, who had careful designs upon the health of his youngest born, asked William his opinion of the use of an overcoat. The old man, upon whose almost bare breast the January wind was blowing, answered: "I dunnot know; I've niver worn a top-coat." A more perfect object lesson could hardly have been given. Opposite his dwelling was a well memorable to the minds of two small boys, whom a fair young cousin had taken to the shop of a good woman, who sold sweetmeats dear to children, though decomposing to their digestion. The little shop contained a tensile kind of toffee vulgarly known as "Swaggering Dick," peppermint of various degrees of astringence, and those horrid cakes, the sticky surface of which is thickly plastered with magenta sugar. The boys had eaten "not wisely, but too well," until locomotion was a trouble to them. They were redolent of tell-tale peppermint, and their cheeks were mottled with magenta crumbs. Yet still they wrestled with more cakes in defiance of the warnings of exhausted nature. When they came to the well, weary jaws and tired limbs could hold out no longer, and they sat down by its silvery trickle, and softened their last re-

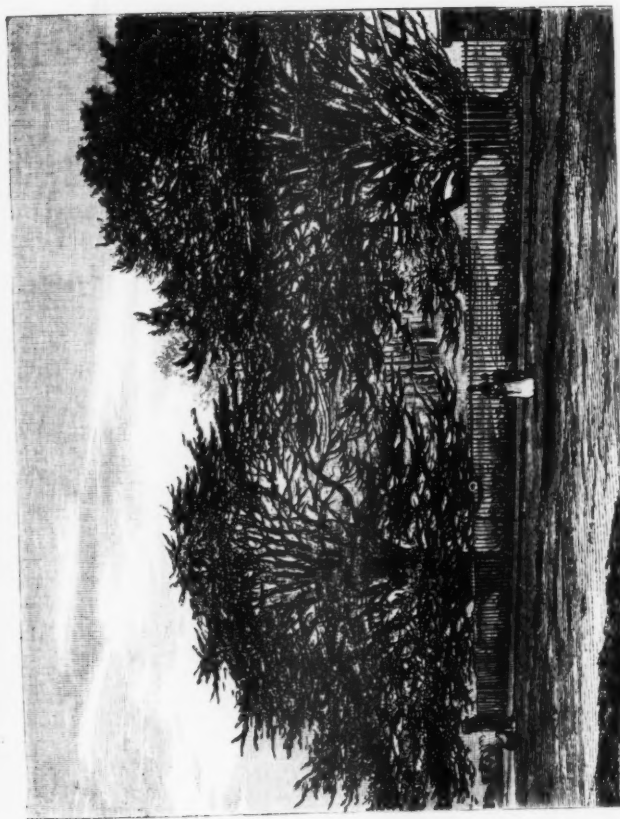
maining cake with running water. When they got home their misdirected energy received a merited but inappropriate punishment: they were sent supperless to bed—vain penalty, as if they had not already eaten enough for a week.

At a shady corner, where the old and new roads to Beauchamp met, stood a tree long since withered, which once bore human fruit. On it was hung in chains a man who had robbed the mail. His bones rattled in the night wind to the terror of evil-doers, until they were taken down and buried beneath the tree. A cup was made of the skull, which found its way to a venerable inn in the great city of Newcome. Along the old road coaches sped on their dusty course, and once, at least, the press-gang made its hateful appearance. Two of the villagers escaped from its clutches in an ingenious fashion. When the grim myrmidons of the Navy made their appearance in the cottage of the first, they saw a young man groping his way about with a stick, and they were cheated of their destined prey by his closed eyes and by his solemn words: "May God take pity on the poor blind man." When they had retired the temporarily blind man recovered his sight, and rejoiced at the unexpected success of his stratagem. The second fell into their griping clutches, and they bore him off to the nearest port, when he sprang from the top of the coach into the branches of the trees which overhung the road. When four score years had silvered his hair the old man loved to tell the exciting story of his escape to a crowd of gaping youths, who had scarcely even heard of the press-gang.

The villagers had their pet superstitions; most of them believed that an unbaptised child was either the special property of the devil, or compelled to walk as a lone lorn ghost with no fixed abode, and continually liable to the spiritual Vagrancy Acts. One dark night it was noised







*Woodcut by Langdon from Drawing by Hall.*

THE CEDARS AT GADSHILL PLACE.





through Barnton that a strange and monstrous ghost had been seen peering through the gate of the little Chapel. The stories relating to its outer spirituality were as varied as the imaginations of the narrators, but everyone in the village had seen the apparition, though most of them were snugly in bed at the time of its appearance. The difference in the accounts of the ghost-seers did not weaken the belief in the ghost itself; indeed, the truth rather gains than loses credit from slight variations in its presentment. The most consistent description of the uncanny being proclaimed "that it was a great black thing, with no head, and a huge pair of horns, dragging a chain." Where the ghost wore its horns was a dilemma beyond the explanation of those who had seen it. But the fact remains that nine-tenths of the villagers set down the mysterious phantom as the ghost of an unbaptised child, whose innocent little body had recently been laid in the graveyard. Some were bold enough to assert that the phenomenon was simply the neighbouring farmer's pet billy-goat, which had gone astray on the evening in question, and presumably had thereby lost its head. But so rationalistic a suggestion was received with indignation and contempt by all lovers of the marvellous, and those who made it were said to be "too cliver to live long."

But amid many superstitions in Barnton, there was one object of peculiar veneration in Beauchamp. The Lord of the Manor was one of an ancient Catholic family; the Chapel at Beauchamp was his private chapel; while its venerable and kindly priest played the part of his spiritual director. The seat of the family had once been at a considerable distance from the handsome new hall in which he himself lived. Standing amongst waving woods, made vocal by the hoarse cries of multitudes of rooks, the old mansion was far from the road, with its chapel of ease and

graveyard. Here in former days a priest, who had taken too active an interest in politics in the sixteenth century, was hanged for his pains. As his body swung from a convenient oak one of the faithful cut off his hand, which was, and is, carefully preserved in a white satin bag. When the Chapel was removed to Beauchamp this precious relic was borne thither to become one of its chief treasures, and not without reason, for its healing virtues were published far and wide. On most Saturday afternoons there was a long procession of the sick, the halt, and the lame, who wended their weary way in faith to be touched by the "Holy Hand." Many cures are said to have been effected by this simple means, and where the ailment is merely nervous an imaginary cure is not difficult to perform. Superstitious these poor folks might be, but there was something infinitely touching in their simple faith, which is not to be found in the present day superstition of agnosticism, a form of belief or no-belief which can effect no cures real or imaginary.

Such was the village of Barnton "in the brave days of old," when the mining operations, which have tunnelled beneath its foundations were still in embryo. Now its face is changed, and by no means entirely for the better, while the men and women of an older and simpler time sleep beneath the sod. Lines of red-brick houses, streets more or less dingy according to the character of their inhabitants, dead trees, sinking roads, and other testimonies to increasing civilisation disfigure the once rural spot, like the poor-spirited Philistine who carves his name on everything old. The public-houses have multiplied to minister to the miners' perpetual thirst, post-offices have taken the place of the original coaches, lines of gas-lamps put to flight the former darkness, a busy railway bears eager purchasers once a week to Warley, and the shops have multiplied tenfold.

The change is no doubt salutary and in the best interests of progress, but those who knew and loved the village in its earlier prime cannot repress a sigh of regret that civilisation should be so deadly a foe to natural beauty, and that increased comfort should "thrust out nature with a pitchfork."

The tall chimneys of the mines belch forth their dense volumes of unconsumed carbon into the once pure air; fields which were long ago the haunt of rare wild flowers now betray the burrowing enterprise of man by their sunken surfaces. Nay, it is even said that a collier working underground on one occasion felt something dropping on his head. Suddenly the daylight broke upon him, and, to his intense astonishment, if hardly to his unmixed delight, he found himself in the potato-patch of his own garden, from which he had been anointed with a mingled medley of soil and tubers. The village is changed now, and has become a town with the advantages of a town; the simplicity of the people has given way to that thin veneer of knowledge which is the common result of our as yet extremely imperfect system of education. The cheerful sound of the handloom is heard no more; the fires in the smithy are burned out; the ghosts have vanished to their own place; and the elders lie in the graveyard. But in spite of the advance of trade and comfort, something of the beauty of life has passed away from Barnton, which cannot but be regretted; time moves onward, and the noisy works of man obliterate almost all traces of the more peaceful days of those who were before them.





## KINGLAKE'S "EOTHEN."

BY R. H. SELBIE.

AS there are various kinds of travellers so are there various kinds of books of travel. Travellers may be roughly divided into three classes. First there are what may be called the scientific travellers, men who either at the instigation of their countrymen, or from their own native love of adventure and discovery, seek to penetrate into unknown quarters of the globe, or to scale heights hitherto untouched by the foot of man. These are the men who may be said to make geography, and to whom we are indebted for much interesting information, not only of a scientific, but also of a commercial value. Then there are the restless spirits who are never happy for long in one place, who spend their lives, perhaps not unprofitably to themselves, in journeying about from country to country, comparing the modes of life of different peoples, studying their religions or their dietaries as the fit takes them, and acquiring a fund of knowledge which, if they put it to no other purpose, serves to broaden their minds and enlarge their sympathies. In the third place there is the much-scoffed-at globe-trotter, who makes the grand tour because it is the proper thing to do, and in order that he may be able to say that he has done it, and which, by the way, is often all he can say about it. In addition to these there is our old friend the "bona-fide" traveller, whose bona-fide character, as someone has said, is his "proud passport to intoxication." With him, however, we are not concerned

at present. His Sabbatical thirst, his subtle wiles, and his three-mile limit, are they not all written in the book of the chronicles of the Royal Commission?

Now if we turn to books of travel, we find that they, too, admit of classification. In the first place there are the purely scientific works, consisting often of papers and treatises read before the British Association or the Geographical Society. These are mainly of a technical character, and make their appeal to the specialist rather than to the general public. They have often a blue-book flavour about them, and, while crammed with valuable information, cannot be regarded as literature. Then there are the books which achieve a much wider popularity than those just mentioned on account of their being less directly scientific and more strongly infused with the personalities of their authors. In this category we may place such works as those of Sir Richard Burton, Stanley, and Nansen. There is, then, a third class in which this personal element predominates, and in which there is little or no attempt made at scientific exactness. Amongst these, I would put in the first rank R. L. Stevenson's "Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes," Borrow's "Bible in Spain," and "Lavengro," Sterne's "Sentimental Journey," Boswell's "Tour in the Hebrides with Dr. Johnson," and the book we have now under review, Kinglake's "Eothen." There is unfortunately, yet another class of books of so-called travel, which we may mention with a shudder, and simply for the purpose of warning ourselves and each other to give them a wide berth. I refer to such books as Dick, Tom, and Harry, and, alas! sometimes Mary, see fit to inflict from time to time, generally by subscription, upon their unsuspecting friends after an attack of influenza has necessitated their taking a Cook's trip to Egypt, Norway, Madeira, or some other tourist-burdened place.

There can, I think, be no doubt that it is to books of the third class I have mentioned, namely, the class to which "Eothen" belongs, and to them alone amongst books of travel, that the term "literature" can be properly applied. Unlike other books of travel and discovery, they are not dependent for their interest upon the newness and accuracy of the facts they record. They have a value of their own as books separate and distinct from these things. The writers of them were literary men before they became travellers, and merely allowed the circumstance of their travelling to give the direction to their art. Being literary men, they have been able to put before us the result of their observations in language which itself lends merit to their works, and they have been able to give their proper place and proportions to the various incidents related. Their object has not been to state so many dull facts and figures, or to air new theories in regard to the interrelation of phenomena; they have written for the love of writing, and to put on record their own ungarnished impressions of what they saw and felt during their travels. Science advances with rapid strides, the startling discovery of yesterday is an accepted fact to-day, and to-morrow will have passed into the region of the commonplace. But art and human nature are in essence the same in all time, and it is because the books I have referred to are so full of the individuality of their authors and so justly rank as works of art that they will live and flourish as classics long after the merely scientific books are forgotten. Now it follows, I think, from what I have said, that books of this class are by no means dependent for their interest upon the scenes in which the travels described were conducted. Had Robert Louis Stevenson travelled through Ireland on a jaunting-car, or through Russia in a droshky, he would have given us his impressions and recounted

his adventures in quite as entertaining a book as that in which he tells of his journey through the Cevennes on the back of his faithful ass Modestine. If Boswell had led the immortal lexicographer through the wilds of Central Africa he could not have given us a more delightful account of the expedition than he did as the result of their modest excursion among the Western Islands of Scotland. He was the prince of biographers and story-tellers, and the locus of his narrative is a matter of secondary importance. And again, who cares in what country it was that Lawrence Sterne took his sentimental journey so long as we have the wise saws and modern instances of which his book is full, and can watch him as he sails his dainty craft of anecdote so deliciously near the wind in treating of the frailties of our poor human nature?

It is very much the same with "Eothen," though, perhaps, in a less marked degree. Kinglake had no established reputation for writing light and entertaining prose as had Stevenson and Sterne, but I think it is not difficult to see from the style in which "Eothen" is written that his turn of mind was such that he would have extracted pleasure and interest from his surroundings in whatsoever country he had travelled, no matter how devoid of actual adventure his journey might have been. He happened to travel in the East, and he has given us a most delightful account of his experiences there; but at the same time the fund of humour which the book contains, and the half-serious moral reflections which we meet with so often in its pages, would have been at his service, and would, no doubt, have been called into requisition if his journey had been either north, south, or west, instead of east.

Alexander William Kinglake was born in 1809 at Taunton, in Somerset. He was educated at Eton and Cambridge, and was the college contemporary of Thackeray

and Tennyson. It was in 1835, at the age of 26, that he made the Eastern tour which he describes so happily in "Eothen." The book, however, did not appear until nine years later, as Kinglake was far from satisfied with it, and was somewhat diffident about its publication. The reception it met with and the popularity it has since maintained have long ago proved how groundless were his fears. On completing his college course Kinglake entered Lincoln's Inn, and in 1837 was called to the Bar. In 1854 he went to the Crimea, and was present at the battle of Alma. It was on this expedition that he became acquainted with Lord Raglan, and as he stayed with the army until the opening of the siege, he was well equipped for the task of writing a history of the campaign, which he undertook at the suggestion of Lady Raglan, who, for the purpose, handed over to him all the papers in her possession. In 1857 he was elected as Liberal Member for Bridgewater, which seat he held till 1868. He died in 1891 at the ripe age of 82 after much severe suffering, caused by a cancer in the tongue. Mr. Leslie Stephen, writing of him, says: "A singularly gentle and attractive manner covered without concealing the generosity of sentiment and chivalrous sense of honour which prompted his eloquent denunciation of wrong-doing."

The route taken by Kinglake in the journey described in "Eothen" was one seldom travelled by Englishmen, and it is easy to see that the fact of its being out of the beaten track was one of its main attractions for him. Leaving Europe and civilisation behind him, he crossed the River Save, and found himself where his imagination had so often led him, amongst what he describes as the "splendour and havoc of the East." It is not difficult to enter into his feelings as he set foot for the first time in that quarter of the globe which, above all others, is rich in historic and



literary associations. He must be a dull and unimaginative soul indeed who would not be stirred to the depths of his being by the thoughts which such surroundings would induce. After having smoked a pipe of peace and exchanged courtesies with the Pasha of Belgrade, Kinglake formed his cavalcade and set off upon his travels. From Servia he passed into Bulgaria, and thence into Turkey, staying for some time at Constantinople. He then journeyed southward by Mount Ida to Smyrna, where he separated from his travelling companion Methley. From Smyrna he took ship to the coast of Syria, and he makes the voyage the occasion for treating his readers to a very delightful description of the vagaries of Greek sailors, whose very primitive ideas of navigation led him to the conclusion that in taking ten years to reach Ithica, Ulysses had made a "good average passage." Kinglake landed at Cyprus, and after being royally entertained by the Vice-Consul of Baffa, again took ship for the mainland, and found himself next at Beyrout. Here he paid his memorable visit to the Lady Hester Stanhope, that most masculine of females, the account of whose life evokes at once our wonder, admiration, and pity. Still journeying southward, he entered the Holy Land, and the chapters he devotes to this part of his subject are exceptionally full of interest. He pays a passing tribute to the old monks of Palestine, and describes the sea of Galilee in very choice language. "Less stern," he says, "than Wastwater, less fair than gentle Windermere, she had still the winning ways of an English lake; she caught from the smiling heavens unceasing light and changeful phases of beauty, and with all this brightness on her face she yet clung so fondly to the dull he-looking mountain at her side as though she would

Soothe him with her finer fancies  
Touch him with her lighter thought.

After crossing the Jordan and visiting Jerusalem he bent his course to Gaza, at which place he "chartered" camels for his journey across the Desert, and in due time arrived at Cairo. From Cairo he made his way to Suez, and thence back by the Desert to Gaza, and through Palestine by a different route from that of the former journey. The book closes somewhat abruptly, leaving him at Satalieh in Turkey.

Among this book's many qualities there is one which I think calls for our special notice, alike for its goodness and for its rarity in books of travel. I refer to its scrupulous honesty. The writer, an English gentleman and scholar, and withal a man of sound commonsense, tells us exactly what he felt under the various circumstances in which he found himself as he journeyed "towards the dawn and the day-spring of the sun." He never pretends to have been more deeply affected by what he saw and experienced than he really was. He states frankly in the preface that his narrative is not "merely righteously exact in matters of fact, but it is true in the larger sense that it conveys, not those impressions that ought to have been produced upon any well-constituted mind, but those which were really and truly received at the time of his rambles by a headstrong and not very amiable traveller, whose prejudices in favour of other people's notions were then exceedingly slight." Thus, when he visited Nazareth, and was taken by the Friar to the supposed home of the Virgin Mary, he was momentarily overcome by a strong sense of religious fervour induced by the surroundings, and bowed himself down and kissed the stone which her foot is said to have pressed. He tells us this in all candour, and then goes on to relate how the fit passed away as quickly as it came, and left him with a feeling of "hopeless sanity." It is surely just what would have happened in the case of nine out of every ten

men under the same conditions ; we have all of us experienced revulsions of feeling of a precisely similar kind after some deep chord within us has been suddenly struck. We cannot in this matter-of-fact world be often upon the mountain tops of feeling, and, in truth, we become so acclimatised to the low and monotonous levels of life and thought that when anything occurs to lift us above them we are liable, on the cause that raised us up being withdrawn, to come down with a somewhat painful abruptness. Again, in speaking of the effect produced upon him by the various representations of the Madonna, which, he says, left with him a "faint apprehension of beauty, not compassed with lines and shadows, and touched him with a faith in loveliness transcending mortal shapes." He puts this on record half-apologetically, and with the reserve natural to an Englishman even when writing to a friend, but, for all that, it is there. And to quote one other instance. He visits the ruins outside Paphos, consisting of the "fragments of one or two prostrate pillars," and here the feeling of awkwardness comes over him, which, I am ready to confess, I have myself experienced more than once under similar circumstances. It is very true, as he points out, that if you have "no taste for research and cannot affect to look for inscriptions" a distinct sense of foolishness comes over you on reaching the goal of a merely sentimental pilgrimage. When the feeling which impelled you has gone you have nothing to do but to laugh the thing off as well as you can." Now there is, as I have suggested, nothing extraordinary in this state of mind, but there is something very unusual indeed in anyone admitting, especially in print, that he has experienced it. It is this genial, open-hearted candour pervading every page of the book that contributes so largely to its charm.

The chapters in which he describes the ravages of the

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plague in Stamboul and in Cairo are perhaps amongst the most interesting. The shrinking fear which the presence of the hated disease inspired in the breasts of the natives rendering them specially susceptible to its insidious operations, is set vividly before us; the manner in which the dread of sickness and death brought out all that was most base and selfish in the characters of the half-civilised inhabitants of the towns is put in very striking comparison with the little effect the prevalence of the scourge had upon Kinglake himself and the English doctor who attended his servant, at any rate so far as their own personal safety was concerned. He very soon recognised how large a part fear played in the contracting and development of the disease, and therefore, while exercising ordinary precautions, did not allow the idea of contagion to interfere with his movements or to engross his mind, though he confesses it was only on leaving the plague-stricken city behind him that he became aware how much mental suffering he had really endured whilst within its walls. Having learnt from other parts of the narrative to believe in the writer's strict honesty, we are quite prepared to accept what he says in this connection without hesitation, and without attributing to him either egotism or conceit.

The way in which he deals with the monks of Palestine is little short of masterly. He carefully abstains from treating the subject in any way as a controversial one, but, with the instinct of a true artist, he draws for us two pictures of different sides of their life—the one side, if not on a very exalted level of spirituality, at any rate innocent; and the other heroic and noble in the highest degree. He shows them to us, first living their every-day life in the convent, attending punctiliously to all the religious ceremonials of their creed, and also, with equal zest, to the rights and privileges attaching to the possession of a well-stocked wine-

cellar. And then he shows them to us again, going forth one by one at the stern call of duty, filled with a great Christian zeal, to meet their death in ministering to the plague-stricken people.

As I have previously remarked, the book is overflowing with humour. There is scarcely a page without some quaint allusion or unexpected comparison. Kinglake had evidently a very keen sense of the incongruous, which is the basis of much true humour. His fun is often at his own expense, as he sees himself, a sober, stolid Englishman, with professional leanings, in situations as far removed from the orthodox as the Great Desert is from High Street, Oxford, or the Dead Sea from the Serpentine in Hyde Park. His description of the poor-spirited and droopy barn-door fowls of the Vice-Consul of Baffa as "low-church looking hens" is very happy, as also is his comparison of a mud floor to sleep upon with a mercenary match as being equally conducive to early rising; and we cannot but join with him in the pity he lavished upon the poor devil of a goat-herd of Gomorrah for having such a plain wife: "I spend," he says, "an enormous quantity of pity upon that particular form of human misery." His description, too, of the triple wedding which he witnessed at Suez is very entertaining. "My only reason," he writes, "for mentioning the ceremony, which was otherwise uninteresting, is that I scarcely ever in all my life saw any phenomena so ridiculous as the meekness and gravity of those three young bridegrooms whilst being led to the altar." Surely Kinglake need not have gone so far as Suez to witness a spectacle of this nature; such phenomena, I am inclined to think, are not confined to the East. While in the Holy Land our author seems to have suffered somewhat keenly from the importunities of the insect population, and the dissertation on fleas to which he treats us is as happy as it is gruesome.

"Except at Jerusalem," he says, "never think of attempting to sleep in a 'holy city.' Old Jews from all parts of the world go to lay their bones upon the sacred soil, and as these people never return to their homes, it follows that any domestic vermin which they may bring with them are likely to become permanently resident, so that the population is continually increasing. No recent census had been taken when I was at Tiberias, but I know that the congregation of fleas that attended at my church alone must have been something enormous. It was a carnal self-seeking congregation, wholly inattentive to the service that was going on, and devoted to the one object of having my blood. The fleas of all nations were there. The smug, steady, importunate flea from Holywell Street; the pert, jumping *puce* from hungry France, the wary, watchful *pulce* with his poisoned stiletto; the vengeful *pulga* of Castile with his ugly knife; the German *floh* with his knife and fork, insatiate, not rising from table; whole swarms from all the Russias, and Asiatic hordes unnumbered—all these were there, and all rejoiced in one great international feast."

In reading "Eothen," especially for the second time, one cannot but be impressed with the restraint which the author puts upon himself when treating of the things pertaining to religion, which inevitably occupy a conspicuous place in an account of life and travel in the East. His natural reserve forbids him to hazard any personal opinion or to express any conviction of his own on matters of such momentous import in a book of this character. As one writer has well said: "The resolve that some things are too sacred for travellers' talk, that religion is apart and lives by itself, leaves 'Eothen' at last as a fine piece of secular classic, only not superficial, because we know there is a depth underneath." To the thinking and reverent mind

this adds to, rather than detracts from, the interest of the book. We are conscious of the undercurrent of deep feeling which pervades many parts of it, and it is this consciousness that draws out our sympathy to the author. To charge him with levity in dealing with religious questions, as one is perhaps tempted to do on a cursory perusal of the book, is to do him injustice and to fail in appreciation of his delicacy. It is not difficult to read between the lines in many places the author's profound pity for the people whom he met on account of the mental and spiritual darkness which oppressed them, a pity and love for his kind which is not translatable into words.





## RAILWAY BOOKSTALLS.

BY WALTER BUTTERWORTH.

A RAILWAY station is perhaps the most dismal of public resorts. For din and hideousness it vies with the noisiest and ugliest of modern institutions, which implies much. What is quite so dingy—quite so draughty? One spot only redeems it—the bookstall. That is always bright and warm. Even on foggy days, with sweeping currents of icy air biting almost as nigh as man's ingratitude, when shrieking engines draw up ghostly trains, and shadowy figures stumble in or out, purblind, uncertain, floundering—even on these Stygian days, worthy of Dante's Inferno, the bookstall gives forth a blurred shining, and inviting warmth. Especially towards Christmas, under the genial glow of sentiment inspired by that season, it blossoms like some gorgeous orchid nurtured by the equatorial sun. Christmas is the time when the stall puts on its gayest appearance, with added splendour of coloured plates and festive scenes galore. But each season is in due time pictorially reflected. Ladies' fashions and the mercurial cycle herald the spring. In summer we are called upon to admire heroes of the cricket-field, looking tantalisingly cool in white. Who would not quit the desk and be a cricketer? Yet nowadays the stall betrays the fact that even these lucky dogs take a turn at scribbling. For a consideration W. G. sententiously tells of the past; Ranji and the jocose Fry of the present. In summer, too, the periodicals tempt



us with alluring scenes of lake and sea and mountain. As autumn draws near are depicted bewitching damsels disporting in the treacherous sea, admired of all beholders. The man with the gun sallies out to shoot something, for the day is fine. And the burly footballers burst in untimely, loth to wait for winter.

The display of journals, dailies, evening papers, weeklies, monthlies, is suggestive. They form a microcosm of this hurrying age. Examine the overflowing spread of them on one of the great stalls of a terminus, and it is found to be like the chameleon, constantly changing. Each week a new periodical, each week a disappearance, but the latter we scarcely notice. The new paper, the new plaything, the new man, grips our attention. The old, the accustomed, escapes us. Even the old friend may drop out unperceived. So the journals come and go; a brief appearance in staring cover, and their place knows them no more. Not all the lying advertisements and fallacious promises have availed.

It is not easy to realise the modernity of our bookstall. A mushroom—a thing of yesterday. Our fathers tell us how they remember the time when not a scrap of the railway itself existed. Now its development threatens to leave us scant breathing space. All this is an echo of the mental activity shown on the stall. Addison, Steel, Johnson, would feel a lively curiosity could they look upon this evolution of the "Spectator," the "Idler," the "Rambler." For it is an index of modern life—or of a very large portion of it. What the many-headed multitude desires to read it supplies. Will you have snippets, small doses of information, tags and scraps of spasmodic facts, gossip, sports, gambling, etc.—here they are to your liking. Much provision is there, also, of solidier information and more refined amusement.

We have discovered that the Boers are mobile. The stall is mobility itself. It changes its aspect with the events of each day. Is some great man dead? Up go his portraits showing him in childhood, youth, and age. Is some notorious criminal laid up by the heels? As much is done for him. Actors, church dignitaries, public spouters, celebrities, succeed each other endlessly.

In the present time of war our stall wears a martial air. Its kaleidoscopic picture exhibition has become for the nonce a military portrait gallery. Generals and soldiers of all ranks gaze upon us over their mustachoes, and fine fellows many of them are. Maps of the seat of war enlarge our knowledge of geography. Every manœuvre and detail of action is presented in black and white. In them we may study works of pure imagination. The comic papers are hung up seductively—Phil May's latest joke, flanked by the buffoonery of Ally Sloper and the inanity of a simpering actress. Pictorial cartoons, one day vulgarly, truculently jingo, the next virtuously chastising in others the faults themselves committed. This is the humour which depresses.

At the time of the evening trains the stall is alive; it is animation itself. Although boys stand at the entrances of the station, their heaps of evening papers disappearing like melting snow, the stall-holders must slave like the traditional nigger. The nimble ha'penny jumps from hand to hand. *News! Mail! Chronicle!* Orders are monosyllabic and are executed without a "Thank you!" No time for that. "Brevity is the soul of wit," saith the proverb, but not always. Often it is the clipped and truncated speech of people in a hurry. In go the coins and out go the papers, as fast as fingers can serve. Still the black figures bustle into the station, hustle their way to the stall, and rush to the trains, eager to gobble up the latest news

as they voyage home. Thus do we pant after the lying news of the hour.

There is one corner of the stall more sober than the rest—the second-hand book corner. Books which have not “caught on.” Not having been snapped up on their publication, they are quickly superseded. Soon they become dusty, dingy, and ere long disappear, for our stall must show “quick sale and quick returns.” Doubtless the rejected ones of a breathless and yet exacting generation have been relegated to humbler scenes, and may elsewhere be found in the twopenny box. Alas! for those of us who, having missed the intended mark, are shoved aside and eventually dropped.

The antithesis of these shabby books, cast into the limbo of forgotten things, is the sixpenny novel. Time was, and that not long ago, when but one set of these cheap sixpenny novels graced the counter. They were dubbed “standard” novels, though they were rather a heterogeneous lot. The *Waverleys* came first, then Ainsworth's, Lytton's, and so on. These were the pioneers. But times have changed. The public asks for the latest thing, apparently finding mere novelty or the outcome of the last moment of recorded time necessarily a thing of value. Smart publishers, adepts at all the tricks of advertising, push the latest successes for all they are worth, and a good deal more. The competition is nerve-shattering, but no matter; the devil takes the hindmost—and perhaps sometimes the foremost.





## THE NOMENCLATURE OF THE POWER LOOM.

BY OSCAR S. HALL.

THE nomenclature of the power loom opens out a wide and interesting field of study and research. It takes us back to the troublous days accompanying the period of transition from hand-weaving to power-weaving; it gives us a glimpse into the education and thoughts, wit and humour, of the operatives, mostly Lancashire, who were beginning to develop and use the power loom, because on account of the power loom containing more parts than the hand loom it was necessary that names should be coined for the convenient recognition of those parts.

It may perhaps be well to remark that the names of the various pieces of the power loom differ in different districts, and also that the designations to be placed before the reader do not all belong—although generally—to every power loom, but to various types.

If a person totally ignorant of the power loom and its several portions were to stroll into a weaving mill or a power loom-making establishment, and casually hear some of the curious names in common use therein, he could easily come to the conclusion that a menagerie was in the immediate neighbourhood, or that a power loom was another title for an animal. If such an individual were to close his seeing organs, and solely rely upon the voices he heard, he could come at one time to the opinion that human beings were being operated upon; at another that

he was sojourning in the ladies' department of some draper's shop, or that he had somehow got mixed up with all the world and its contents. It could also be easily imagined that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals might find great scope for its exertions in such establishments. It would probably shock the susceptibilities of an innocent, kind-hearted old lady if she stood behind a man and heard him say, "William, tell Bill to fetch fifty monkeys' tails," or asking how many swan's necks and ducks' bills were ready. A power loom possesses a monkey's or a monkey tail. Why the piece of the loom with this designation was thus christened I cannot conjecture, unless monkeys wag their tails. With my slight knowledge of the natural history of the monkey I am not in a position to say whether monkeys do wag their tails or not, but this part of a power loom is continually moving to and fro, and may be straight or curved.

Power looms also possess swans' necks and ducks' bills in addition to horses' heads; no doubt these parts are so termed because of some resemblance. In fact, most of the names attached to the separate parts of the power loom seem to have been given by reason of some fancied similarity of shape or movement.

A human being is represented in the power loom by fingers, cheeks, heels, teeth, backs, and—what probably some individuals would like to possess—back eyes.

Natural history is not neglected, because the power loom owns frogs, indeed even frogs with wings. Perhaps these parts were so termed because, when in the natural exercise of their functions they are suddenly touched, they jump. Like many other machines, the power loom possesses worms, and also extends its kindly care to two or more lambs. And as to fashions, what more can we expect than to be informed that a power loom is the proud possessor

of ruffles, hoops, linings, earrings, stays, and caps. And what puzzled me for a long, long time indeed, was the fact that a piece termed an "old hat" was included in its inventory. I could understand the hat because the piece is of hat shape, but why "old hat"? At last I hit upon the solution; it was because it had a hole in the top.

The circus has added its quota to the nomenclature of the power loom, in that it has given us a tumbler and a juggler. The term juggler is very appropriate indeed, the part bearing this title cutting most remarkable capers, turning cart-wheels, springing up and down, standing on its head, and striking its complimentary piece in the due exercise of its allotted task. The juggler would probably not receive such an appellation if brought into existence and baptised at the present day, but in former times, when first introduced, I should fancy the work accomplished by it was considered very clever and remarkable.

And as for the household, the power loom rejoices in the possession of hammers, shelves, staples, forks, and what are very essential—rockers, binders, and cradles.

Banks have not been overlooked. No doubt our worthy old weavers had their thoughts fixed upon such-like institutions, and have dubbed special parts of the loom which control certain movements as "tellers." Whilst a lawyer had possibly been visited, when such a name as scroll was added to the vocabulary.

Astronomy has also added its little share to the power loom. Probably one of our young weavers had been on a courting, or, as it is termed in the Lancashire dialect, "quirting," co-urt-ing expedition, and he was so struck with what he saw on the previous evening that he called some of the pieces "half-moons," and others stars, star-wheels.

Plants are not overlooked in the power loom, because stalks and leaves are indispensable to its completion. And

it goes without saying that the harvest of nuts in a power loom never fails.

In order to give a feeling of protection to the power loom, it has been armed with a couple of swords.

In conclusion, the nomenclature of the loom is really very attractive and interesting. I have by no means exhausted the subject, but having drawn attention to the matter, leave it to more capable hands to complete the work. There are, of course, many names connected with the power loom which are common to other machines, for which reason I have not touched upon them.





## JEAN DE LA BRUYÈRE.

BY EDMUND MERCER.

FEW French writers of such eminence in their native country are so little read in England as Jean de La Bruyère, and of fewer still of such literary publicity and merit is so little personally known, either among his own countrymen or abroad. A dozen facts, one anecdote, and a portrait—all of doubtful authenticity—furnish all that biographers can discover; his literary record is one translation, one book, one speech, and two brief letters. He knew but one country—France; one city—Paris; and one sovereign—Le Grand Monarque. But then what a country, what a city, and what a sovereign—to a Frenchman!

He was born, according to one writer, at Dourdan, in Normandy, in 1639; according to a second, at the same place in 1644; whilst a third names Paris as his native city, and the year of his nativity 1645, adding that he was baptised at the Church of Saint Christopher-en-Cité on August 17th of that year. We are told his parents were *bourgeois*, in spite of their patrician patronymic, though La Bruyère himself refers half-humorously to one ancestor, Geoffroy de La Bruyère, who took a not unprominent part in the Crusades, and to another who held the responsible post of Civil Lieutenant of the City of Paris during the



period of the Battles of the Barricades in the closing years of the reign of Henri Trois and the first decade of that of his successor, Henri de Navarre. Whatever his parentage, the education of La Bruyère was good, since he was called to the Bar—or we had better say, in the phraseology of the time, became a Man of the Robe—in 1665; and his means ample, as in 1673 he purchased the important financial post of *Conseiller-Tresorier*, or Treasurer-General of Caen. This was an enviable sinecure, his presence in the Norman city being quite unnecessary, and his sole duty the receipt of his salary. While engaged for some years in this arduous task he found time to pursue a systematic study of literature and humanity, in course of which he gained the acquaintance of the great Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, by whose influence, in 1684 he was appointed historical tutor to M. le Duc Louis de Bourbon, grandson of the great Condé, with the magnificent annual pittance of one thousand crowns. In this important post—again a sinecure—he remained for two years, diversifying his freedom from work with continuations of his studies of literature and human nature, until in 1686 he was advanced to the equally onerous position of Gentleman of the Chamber to his quondam pupil, with an increase of stipend and a corresponding decrease of responsibility. Amidst the fatigues of the indolent and luxurious life of the Court of his patron at Chantilly, Versailles, and the Hotel Condé in Paris, he lived very simply, and dressed as quietly as was consistent with his remaining unobtrusive in an assemblage decorated with the utmost extravagance, studying all he saw and forgetting nothing, observant, keen, and witty, saying little in his brilliant surroundings, but thinking much—a veritable “chiel amang ’em takkin’ notes,” barely noticed and entirely unsuspected. Great was the consternation, two years later, when, like a bombshell from out a dead stillness,

there burst into the serene self-sufficiency of the most absolutely courtly of Courts a volume of observations, satiric, ironical, unerring, deadly, incisive, as well as kindly and wise—but, worst of all, true—aiming at all and missing none, not even the great-little Louis himself. Envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness flashed round the head of the bold satirist, tempered, however, at first by the praise of Bossuet, Boileau, Fénelon, Racine, and La Fontaine; and eventually subdued into mere vapourings by the approval of the King—the supreme arbiter, in a courtier's eyes, of literary and all other matters whatsoever. The book was purchased alike by those whom it ridiculed and by others whom it ignored, and gained its author animosity on either hand—from the former since they were held up to scorn and did not desire it; from the latter because they would suffer any public degradation rather than remain unnoticed. The book consisted of a translation from the Greek character sketcher Theophrastus, preceded by a prefatory note, both by La Bruyère, and a second portion bearing the title "*Les Caractères ou Les Mœurs de ce Siècle.*" Its publication was as tentative and modest as La Bruyère's self, not issuing from any press favoured at Court, but from that of an obscure bookseller. "He used," says M. Walckenaer, "to go nearly every day to the shop of a bookseller named Michallet, where he would sit down and turn over all the new books, amusing himself at the same time with the pretty little daughter of the bookseller, to whom he had taken a liking. One day he drew from his pocket a manuscript, saying to Michallet: 'Will you publish this? I don't know that it will pay you, but if it should succeed the profit will be for my little sweetheart here.' The bookseller, more uncertain of the result than the author, undertook to publish an edition, and no sooner was it issued than it was sold, and he had to print it time and

time again, and he himself made two or three hundred thousand francs by it. In this unexpected way the book-seller's daughter got her marriage portion, and when, some time afterwards, she married a gentleman in a good position, she took her husband a fortune of more than one hundred thousand livres. "And so the book" (the words are Walckenaer's) "with all its bitter and misanthropical expressions, became, by a strange contrast, a pretty girl's dowry."

By 1693 he had become famous enough to be admitted a member of the French Academy, and his speech on that occasion (now published with his greater work) is said to have been one of the most eloquent ever delivered up to that time in that assembly. Following the usual rules laid down (and even now obeyed) for such a discourse, in praising and otherwise criticising eminent French writers, it became so famous for its brilliant oratory that it gained for La Bruyère the animosity of those living authors whom he had not mentioned in it, and who happened to be his fellow-members. To such a degree was this ill-feeling carried that his first appearance before the Academy was also his last. He continued to add further observations to the original "Characters," to which he drew attention in his introductory note to the last edition he prepared for issue. This appeared in Paris in the year of his death, which, swift as apoplexy can ensure it, took place at Versailles on May 11th, 1696.

As to La Bruyère's own character, the Abbé d' Olivet writes of him as "a philosopher who loved a quiet life among his friends and books, able to make a good choice of both, neither seeking nor evading pleasure, disposed to simple enjoyments and ingeniously creating them, polished in his manners and wise in his discourse, and so afraid of notoriety that he modestly hid even his talent."

Though fate made him spend all his life at Court, she failed to make him a courtier. It has never been proved that he married, and that he ever fell in love is only suspected. The lady assigned to him by his contemporaries was a Mme. la Marquise de Belleforière, but the evidence of this centred in one beautiful passage, of his chapter "Woman":—"It is possible to be so moved by women of such perfect beauty and transcendent worth that we ask no more than to be permitted to look upon and speak with them." And in another on the "Heart":—"Sometimes into the course of life there come pleasures so dear and attachments so tender which are forbidden us, that it is only natural to wish, at least, that they might be permitted. Their great charm is surpassed only by the knowledge that we have had the moral strength to renounce them." Writing shortly after his death, Saint Simon, his friend and contemporary, expresses all his feelings in this quiet passage: "The public has just lost in La Bruyère a man who must ever be illustrious for his originality, wit, and knowledge of human nature; he has surpassed Theophrastus, whose work he translated. He was a simple, genial, honest man, with nothing of the pedant or self-seeker in his nature. I knew him well enough to regret him and the work which, from his comparative youth, might have been expected of him." To be youthful at fifty-two means a clean life, and even in the licentiousness of the Court of Louis Quatorze, the purity of La Bruyère's habits—food for the scoffer of the day—was never questioned, and his book is as his life was. I think the keynote of his whole life is contained in the simple avowal: "I feel that there is a God, and I do not feel that there is not one. This suffices me, and renders a whole world of logic futile in my eyes. I know that God is, and this conclusion is part of my being. I received its principles too readily in

childhood, and clung to them too naturally in later life to suspect them of any falsity."

The design of La Bruyère's "curious and celebrated book"—I quote from Mr. Saintsbury's admirable description—"is taken, like its title, from Theophrastus, but the plan is very much altered as well as extended. Instead of copying directly the abstract qualities of Theophrastus, and his brief, pregnant, but somewhat artificial and jejune description of them, La Bruyère adopted a scheme much better suited to his own age. He took, for the most part, actual living people, well known to all his readers, and disguising them thinly under names of the kind which the romances of the middle of the century had rendered fashionable, made them body forth the characters he wished to define and satirise. These portraits he inserted in a framework not altogether unlike that of the Montaigne essay, preserving no very consecutive plan, but passing from moral reflection to literary criticism, and from literary criticism to one of the half-personal, half-moralising, portraits just mentioned with remarkable ease and skill. The titles of his chapters are rather more indicative of their actual contents than those of Montaigne's essays, but they represent for the most part merely very elastic frames, in which the author's various observations and reflections are mounted. The result of this variety, not to say desultoriness, combined, as it is, with the display of very great literary art, is that La Bruyère's is a book of almost unparalleled interest to take up and lay down at odd moments. Its apparently continuous form, and its intermixture of narrative, save it from the appearance of severity which the avowed *Maxim* or *Pensée* has; while the bond between the different chapters, and even the different paragraphs, is so slight that interruption is not felt to be annoying."

The picture of such a man as La Bruyère at such a Court as that of his sovereign is a very interesting one, and throws a glamour on his book, which, in its turn, reflects a lurid light on the Court. He, the embodiment of modesty, stood unnoticed in the background, whilst Louis, the King, minced along the crowded, cold corridors of Versailles with his "cage of unclean birds," as his most assiduous followers were called. With their monarch thoroughly licentious, capricious, selfish, cold-hearted, but industrious and punctiliously punctual, of excessive vanity, inordinately greedy of flattery, deeming a difference of opinion a personal insult; whose royalty consisted in etiquette, ceremony, stage-posturing, and make-believe, in frowning upon those who disregarded or were unacquainted with the very least of his conventional rules, in preserving an unapproachable hauteur, and in acting the whole day and daily from his *levée* to his *coucher*, the part of a sixth-rate tragedy king; it may easily be imagined that his courtiers approached more nearly to a wilderness of lecherous monkeys than to the trusted escort of a "most Christian Majesty." Since his mistresses governed the King, the King Versailles, and Versailles France, an unparalleled variety of intrigue supplanted men of trust with men of empty pockets; every office was liable to be bought and sold, and wealth instead of merit was the standard of efficiency for almost any post. A low estimate of woman, who herself even assisted the man of the time in his contempt for marriage, a consequent open indulgence in vice, an insane passion for gambling, fraud, swindling, venality of all kinds, triumphed over every kind of virtue at the Court of Louis and his mistress, Madame de Montespan. When she was deposed in favour of the last Queen of Louis, Madame de Maintenon, to all these vices another was added—intense devotion, which was merely a

religious hypocrisy flimsily veiled in courtly polish and address. Truly might La Bruyère say in the very opening of his chapter on the Court: "In one respect the most honourable blame that we can bestow on any man is to tell him that he knows not the Court. There is scarce a virtue with which we do not credit him in that single phrase." Again he observes: "The Court is like a marble edifice—I mean that its human materials are very hard, but very polished"; in another phrase he inquires: "Can there possibly be a greater slave than an assiduous courtier, unless, indeed, it be another, still more assiduous?" His dissertation on the Court is one long, biting denunciation of almost everything in it. We must do him the justice to admit that in bidding farewell to this unwholesome dust-heap of manners he has one word to say in its favour, and the only praise he bestows he flings at it in one last pithy, stinging sentence: "At Court a healthy mind acquires a taste for solitude and retirement."

Fortunately for France, what the Court governed was merely Society and Fashion; the real rulers of the kingdom were the ministers, who, though necessarily in the Court, possessed moral courage enough to be not "of" it. Cardinal Mazarin; the Duc d'Enghien; Colbert, Controller of Finance; Louvois, Secretary of War; Turenne, Commander-in-Chief; were the men who dared to force Louis to attend to the business of State, whose value he recognised, and whom he obeyed from fear of losing them. They, and not Louis and his minions, made France prosperous, and indirectly paved the way for the revival of learning. Mazarin it was who founded the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture and the Mazarin Library; in his passion for music he introduced from his native Italy at the Théâtre Richelieu the first operas ever represented in France. Colbert, in his turn, originated

the Academies of Inscriptions, Science, and Architecture, and multiplied the number of volumes in the Royal Library by four. He began his rule at the death of Mazarin, and after Colbert's decease Louis himself, then in his prime, with the assistance of his mistresses and selfish favourites, governed the country in such a way that, from the Augustan age of its life, it descended to a period of debt, disgrace, poverty, and misery, such as it has never felt since. We have but to recollect the British victories of Blenheim, Malaga, Ramillies, Turin, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet, to recognise something of the low estate of France, which became still worse, so that at the death of Louis in the midst of none but a few menials, the country rejoiced as though delivered from a calamity.

La Bruyère's experience of Court life began during the decadent and most absolute period of the reign of Louis, and ended before corruption had thoroughly undermined its constitution. It had its compensations, for here he met the aged Mairet, the first dramatist to write French tragedies according to the modern fashion; Corneille, Racine, Crebillon, the Æschylus of France, and Molière, with the latter of whom he was bracketed as having done "more to correct the follies and indecours of the age than any other writer either ancient or modern, not excepting Aristophanes in Greece and Cervantes in Spain." Here, too, were the comedian Regnard and the poets La Fontaine; Boileau, the "Alexander Pope" of France, and Chaulieu, its "Tom Moore." He reckoned among his friends the great preachers Bossuet, Massillon, Bourdaloue, Flechier, and Fénelon; the romancers Scarron, Le Sage, Marmontel, and Marivaux, all knew him. At Court, too, were to be seen Moreri and Bayle, the forerunners of the Encyclopædists, Madame de Sévigné, of epistolary fame, Vauban, the great military engineer, Pascal, the philoso-



pher La Rochefoucauld, the Maxim writer, Cassini, the astronomer, Lenôtre, the designer of the greatest gardens in France, Turnefort, the "Father of Botany," Mansard, the architect, Perrault, one of the builders of the Louvre, his brother Charles, the writer of the fairy tales, and lastly, the famous Abbé Galland, who earned the unfading gratitude of youths, young and old, by his introduction into Europe of the "Arabian Nights." With these and others such as they, he conversed and varied the monotony consequent on the duties of a gentleman of the chamber to a royal prince; from them he learnt much that he utilised and in their companionship he enjoyed the favour of the king when that potentate was in his saner moods. Such is the value of his observations, not only of the Court, but of the whole estates of literature, science, art, and human nature in their various aspects, that the student of French history, who has not read La Bruyère through, does not, at all events, know the reign of Louis Quatorze.

He began the first of the sixteen chapters of his book in a kind of despair: "Everything has been said. After seven thousand years of the life and thought of man, we are born too late," but encouraging himself with the reflection that though on the field of life the best grain had been harvested, it was yet possible to act as gleaner, he settled to his self-imposed and congenial task, and eventually produced a work to which his critics still give the palm for shrewdness, commonsense, and good taste, in its matter, originality in arrangement, sententiousness in thought, and ease, grace, and fluency without weakness in its style. Where all is good it is difficult to choose the best, and impossible to choose wrongly; but without committing myself to any opinions, unless they are distinctly stated, it will perhaps be interesting to allow La Bruyère to speak for himself in such English as seems fitting, subject to this

observation—that no translation of any author is adequate or compensatory for the original tongue; the matter may be present, but the manner is missing—it is like flat champagne.

When a man thinks of writing a book his first spare thoughts not unnaturally tend towards the books of others. La Bruyère's opening chapter, therefore, concerns itself as well with literature, ancient and modern, as with art and the drama under the title "On Intellectual Work." That it is "work" he illustrates in a "criticism" and a "character": "The writing of books is as much a trade as clockmaking. Something more than intellect is requisite for an author. A magistrate, subtle and skilful in his own profession, was advancing by his merit to the highest dignity. He printed a work on morals, which was unique for its absurdity." Of the manner, perhaps, in which such a work might seem ridiculous, he observes: "Deprive most of our books on Morality of their "Advertisement to the Reader," "Epistle Dedicatory," the "Preface, Table of Contents, and Laudatory Addresses," and there barely remains enough to deserve the name of Book." One of his own careful methods La Bruyère seems to disclose in the passage: "Of various phrases capable of expressing a thought only one can be correct; upon which, perhaps, we may not be sufficiently fortunate to alight. Nevertheless it really exists, and others are weak and unsatisfactory to a man who would make himself clearly understood. A clever and careful author often finds that the unknown and long-sought expression proves upon discovery to be the simplest and most natural, and ought apparently to have presented itself at once without effort." La Bruyère had much to say of ancient and contemporary writers, but found the task not always congenial. He tells us that "the pleasure of criticism often deprives us of the happy capa-

city for appreciating the most delightful things," and that he did not altogether believe in criticism he disclosed when he remarked, "the most accomplished work would entirely disappear in the vortex of criticism, would its author only believe all his censors and allow each one to expunge the passage that pleased him least." Under the guise of one of them he has a happy hit at a class of critics whom he observes "have entered into mutual covenants for admiration," and he is equally happy in his jest with the critic inadequate: "Two writers in their books have censured Montaigne, who, I admit, is not altogether above criticism; but they will allow him to be praiseworthy in no respect. The one thinks too little to appreciate a writer who thinks much; the other thinks too cunningly to be pleased with thoughts that are natural," and finally he dismisses the subject of criticism, as that of the Court, with a diatribe: "Most frequently criticism is not a science, but a trade requiring more health than understanding, more labour than capability, more habit than skill."

La Bruyère's second chapter is "On Personal Worth." It consists chiefly of delicate sketches of well known courtiers and famous men of the reign, and observations arising therefrom. He begins well. "The worth of some people centres in their names. When you approach them closely it dwindles to nothing. Distance has deceived us." Indeed he does not seem to lay stress upon the value of a name alone, even though it should require to be worked for "There is no trade in this world so toilsome as that of making a great name; life is over before the work is more than roughed out." With his own particular virtue he is more sympathetic. "Modesty is to merit as the shadows to the figures in a picture, giving strength and tone."

Since women took so prominent a part in the affairs

of France in his day, La Bruyère has much to say of them, but most of it is, as may be expected from their behaviour, discreditable to the sex. He draws in outline terrible and graphic pictures of the gallantry, coxcombry, licentiousness, coquetry, frivolity, and folly that most women in society openly displayed, relieved here and there by beautiful passages, which, amongst the unpleasant realities of his time, seem like ideals. "The most beautiful sight is a sweet face, and the sweetest music the sound of the voice we love" is one such, and another: "The most delightful companion in the world is a beautiful woman, with the good qualities of a gentleman; one finds in her the best of both sexes." The last passage of this chapter which I quote contains considerable pathos, serving to foretell the degradation of the subjects of it: "Some young girls do not sufficiently appreciate the advantages with which nature has blessed them, and how beneficial to them did they yield themselves to her. They spoil these rare and fleeting God-gifts by affectation and pitiful mimicry. The tones of their voices and their mien are borrowed. They study how to fashion their faces, to make themselves sought after, consulting their mirrors as to whether they are sufficiently distant from nature, and it is not without considerable trouble that they make themselves less pleasing."

The succeeding divisions of the work deal with matters of "The Heart," "Society," "Wealth," "Paris," the "Court," "Greatness," "The Government," "Man," "Opinions," "Fashion," "Customs," "The Pulpit," and "Unbelievers." It is noticeable that La Bruyère did not treat of the Country, the Sea, Commerce, or, indeed, anything that did not come within range of his immediate vision, except so far as such subjects might furnish an apt illustration or set off his particular idea by contrast. He makes two terrible indictments of the behaviour of the upper

classes in his day. Indirectly, where he utters such a satire as this on the state of the peasantry: "We see at times certain savage animals, both male and female, dark, sallow, and sunburnt, spread over the country, bound to the soil in which they wallow and grovel with invincible resolution. They possess articulate speech, and when they stand erect, they exhibit something of a human face, and to all intents and purposes they belong to mankind. At night they retire to their dens, where they feed on black bread, roots, and water. They spare other men the trouble of sowing, digging, and reaping for a livelihood, and thus deserve at least no lack of the bread they have sown." And directly in the following, which Steele translated in No. 57 of "The Tatler," describing it as "one of the most elegant pieces of raillery and satire" he had ever read: "I have heard talk of a country where the old men are gallant, polished, and polite; the young men, on the contrary, stubborn, wild, lacking both manners and civility. They have become enfranchised from passion for women at an age when in other countries it is begun to be felt, and prefer feasts, victuals, and ridiculous amours. Amongst these people he who is never drunk with anything but wine is sober, its too frequent use rendering it insipid to them; they endeavour by brandy and other strong liquors to quicken a taste already extinguished, and need nothing to crown their debauches but draughts of aqua fortis. The women of that country hasten the decay of their beauty by their artifices to preserve it; they paint their cheeks, eyebrows, and shoulders, which they lay bare, as well as their breasts, arms and ears, as though afraid to hide these parts they fancy will please, thinking they can never show them sufficiently. The physiognomy of the people of that country is not at all neat, but bewildering and embarrassed with a bunch of strange hair, which they prefer to their own, and

of which they make a long tissue to cover their heads ; this descends half-way down their bodies, alters their appearance, and prevents you from recognising them by their features. These people have also their God and king. The *grandeës* go daily at a certain hour to a temple called a church, at the upper end of which stands an altar consecrated to their God, where the priest celebrates certain mysteries they consider holy, sacred and awe-inspiring. The notables form a large semi-circle at the foot of the altar, standing with their backs to the priest and the holy mysteries and their faces turned towards their king, who is seen kneeling on a throne, and to whom they appear to direct their hearts' desires. There is to be remarked in this custom a kind of subordination, since the people seem to worship the prince, and the prince worships God. The inhabitants of this region call it ———. It is in latitude 48 degrees, and over eleven hundred leagues by sea from the lands of the Iroquois and Hurons."

"*Les Caractères*" was first published in 1688 in a small edition, a single volume, duodecimo, of 360 pages, in large type. Theophrastus and the preliminary discourse thereto occupied 149 pages, and the remainder of the book was divided into sixteen chapters, consisting chiefly of observations, the portraits being few in number. Three editions, each succeeding one larger than its predecessor, were soon exhausted, and in the fourth first appeared those pen-portraits that created so much stir in social quarters. There is little doubt that the author intended the translation of Theophrastus to be his principal work, and added his own observations as a series of reflections and moral remarks after the style of his contemporary La Rochefoucauld, together with a few sketches of minor personages of his acquaintance ; and he even gave this portion of his writings the name of Solomon Proverbs. But the book gaining

instant popularity from his original matter, he was emboldened to add to the fourth edition a number of observations more personal and portraits, more daring than his first venture warranted, inserting both kinds in appropriate chapters. Thus, by what may be called a happy accident, the present form of the book became original in its arrangement; and—curious inversion—in modern editions La Bruyère's own work constitutes the volume, the portion allotted to Theophrastus being by way of addendum in small type.

The sudden fame accruing to La Bruyère did not dazzle him or disturb his mental equipoise, nor would the absence of fame have altered his demeanour or made his work less valuable. In his first edition he, in a passage anticipating by sixty years the "mute, inglorious Milton" of Gray, expressed his feelings on the matter: "How many admirable men of the finest genius have died without recognition. And how many, still living, have never been heard of and never will be!" and more emphatically still he closed his work with a characteristically philosophic remark: "If these characters are not relished I shall be surprised; if they are I shall be surprised just the same." As might be anticipated in a period when most men played the ape, a host of imitators arose on all sides, and we are told that, besides La Bruyère's ten editions, the literary world was inundated with thirty different volumes of "*Caractères*" under various titles, all, more or less, copies of the famous original, from such forgotten hands as Brillon, Alléaume, L'Abbé de Bellegarde, L'Abbé de Villiers, and others. These plagiarists—Sainte Beuve likens them to "flies on a plate of sweetmeats"—must often have annoyed La Bruyère, and caused him in later editions to write, it is said, against L'Abbé de Villiers the paragraph: "I advise a born copyist, whose extreme modesty permits him to write only

after the manner of some other author, to choose for examples those kinds of work with whose wit, imagination, or learning he is in sympathy. If he does not attain the level of his originals he may come near them, and cause his copy to be read. On the other hand, he should avoid, like shipwreck, the imitation of those who write from instinct, or from their very heart, which inspires them with thoughts in appropriate language, and who draw, so to say, from their innermost soul what they express on paper. They are dangerous models, and precisely such as inspire dullness, triviality, and ridicule in those who take upon themselves to copy them. Indeed, I should laugh at a man who endeavoured to speak with my voice or to resemble me in countenance."

From the variety of La Bruyère's "faultlessly-finished ideas"—to use Sainte Beuve's expression—we may gather a sense of different fashions of life, humorous, scholarly, charming and grave, serene, severe, brisk and philosophic, such as seems impossible for one person to compass. The explanation, perhaps, is that La Bruyère as a moraliser, like Shakespeare and Molière, had the gift of entering into each variety of mind in succession, with this advantage as between the first and last named—Molière in real life fell into the same mistakes as his characters on the stage; La Bruyère was too wise. Molière was perhaps all the more lovable, but La Bruyère was the better adviser. It was said by contemporaries that the student referred to in his sketch of Clitiphon was his own portrait. The student needing the assistance of Clitiphon enters his house, and, after wasting time, fails to see him; then, by way of contrast, La Bruyère continued: "O busy and important man, who in turn have need of my services, enter into the solitude of my study. The philosopher is accessible; I do not defer you to another day. You will find me among the



works of Plato dealing with the spirituality of the soul and its distinction from the body, or with pen in hand calculating the distances from Saturn or from Jupiter. I admire God in all His works, seeking by the knowledge of truth to rule my spirit and grow better. Enter! All my doors are open to you. My antechamber is not intended to weary you in waiting for me; pass onwards to me without any announcement. You bring me something more precious than gold and silver if it is an opportunity to oblige you." This is also an example of the "human beauty" of La Bruyère's mind. It was not so filled with philosophy that humanity had no share in it. Witness the picture of the peasantry already quoted, and in addition this: "I admit the necessity for captives, executions, prisons, and punishment; but, apart from justice, law, and necessity, it is ever a surprise to me to consider the violence of men toward each other."

That he was truly religious will be inferred from the reference I have already quoted, but this did not prevent him from inflicting the lash of his sarcasm on the *dévots*, as the pseudo-devout followers of the King and his consort, Madame de Maintenon, were called. He denounced them in one phrase of witty wisdom: "A *dérot* is one who, under an atheist monarch, would be an atheist." He did not hesitate to address Louis himself, and under the veil of telling him what he thought the King did, gave him counsel what he ought to do. "It is a delicate thing for a religious prince to reform his Court and render it pious. Aware how much the courtier desires to please him, what sacrifices he makes to secure his fortune, the prince treats him prudently, and tolerates and humours him for fear of plunging him into hypocrisy or sacrilege. He expects more from God and time than from his own zeal and industry." La Bruyère's last chapter "On Unbelievers" seems to give his own sound

reasoning for his spiritual belief. It is a fine peroration, and, coming last, its veiled beauty is in true accord with his cautious expectation of attack, and yet in it he avows with vigour his own deep convictions. Apart from its author's desire to lash the intense hypocrisy of the Court under the Maintenon regime—Madame being really intent on religious reform, the courtiers only pretendedly so—this chapter was necessitated by the support he gave to the rather free and bold philosophy of his time, and to cover any counter attack from that quarter by the *dévots*, by openly avowing his own position and its strength and impregnability.

It is asserted that La Bruyère was less a thinker than a clever writer. He invented no system of philosophy; but a satirist—to call him that and nothing more—if he be not a mere scurrilous buffoon, must think deeply and write skillfully; he must be a clever physician, able not only to diagnose the ill, but to know the cure and the method of its application. It is impossible to propound however brilliant a maxim containing a truth without thought. The satires of Juvenal, Persius, and Horace, and the Epigrams of Martial still live to refute any theory of thoughtlessness, though the things they whipped and their very language have passed away. Voltaire admired La Bruyère and amongst other things praises him in this manner: "The 'Characters' may justly be regarded as one of the wonderful productions of the age in which he lived. Among the ancients we find no such work. A style rapid, concise, and nervous, expression animated and picturesque; a use of language altogether new, without transgressing its established rules, drew the attention of the world, and the allusions to living characters under a very slight veil succeeded in insuring its success. When La Bruyère showed his work to Malézieux he was told that the book would have many readers,

and its author many enemies. When his generation whose follies it attacked had passed away it lost somewhat of its original fame ; yet as it contains much that applies to all times and places, it will never be altogether forgotten." John Locke, too, was much struck with the work, and it was a favourite both in France and England with all readers of taste and discernment. Its effect on French literature was very great. The affectation and pedantry of French writers of the first half of the seventeenth century had introduced into the language, like Milton in "*Paradise Lost*," an overwhelming number of Latinisms, and Boileau, for a prominent writer a great sinner in this respect, rejoiced, like Pope, in flowing polysyllables. La Rochefoucauld, in his sententious Maxims, did much towards damming this overflow of Gallicised Latin, and La Bruyère, with his wider insight and greater popularity, directed the current of language into a better channel. He has given a short history of French prose in a single paragraph : "For the last twenty years the style of composition has been careful and accurate ; syntax has been properly regarded ; the language has been enriched with many new words ; we have cast off the yoke of Latinism and confined ourselves to phraseology purely French. We have almost recovered that harmony which Malherbe and Balzac first revealed to us, and their numerous successors suffered to be lost. Our language has now all the style and distinction of which it is capable, and this will eventually bring imagination in its train." This imaginative style was unknown in La Bruyère's time, and La Bruyère determined to introduce it into literature, and in this he exercised a great and delicate influence. Taste was gradually changing, and La Bruyère unconsciously piloted the change.

His influence in effect extended into England about

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1697, where the then only and most inadequate English version of his book, by the Laureate, Nicholas Rowe, reached its sixth edition in 1713. He is even believed to have suggested indirectly to the long series of essayists of the Queen Anne School the model for their works of which the "Tatler" was the eminent pioneer. As has been already noticed, Steele was well acquainted with his book, and Budgell received his idea of the famous story of Will Honeycomb's absent-mindedness, told in No. 77 of the "Spectator," from La Bruyère's inimitable sketch of Menalcas, which he quoted in full. During the eighteenth century the popularity of La Bruyère waned considerably, and a witticism that his "Characters were too much of their age, and not for all time" was given as the reason for this. But in France he has become a classic, and is very popular, whilst in England, though he is difficult to read without more consideration than is usually necessary for the understanding of French prose, owing to his frequent elisions and his epigrammatic methods, he is not quite forgotten. The best French edition is a recent one, edited by M. Servois, in three volumes and published by Messrs. Hachette. English versions are few in number, and all out of print; the most recent, and, I venture to think, the most inadequate one being issued as recently as 1890 or thereabouts. That he will be popular in England is very doubtful, despite his interest and value as a French writer, owing, no doubt, to the absence of a respectable version at a reasonable price, for those whose French does not date back to the era of Louis XIV. I think it may almost be said, in respect of La Bruyère's work, as of Montaigne's greater one, that "an English gentleman's education ought not to be considered complete unless he has read it," since, in Sainte Beuve's words, "its far-reaching and original talent will help us to remember modera-

tion, and teach us to proportion thought to language ; it would even be a step gained to be able to regret our inability to do this."

English literature has no book like it, and French literature no other. To it and to himself may fittingly be applied the words that La Bruyère used of certain great men : " There appear from time to time on the face of this earth certain rare and exquisite men, brilliant in their worth, whose eminent qualities throw forth a shining light, like those extraordinary stars, of whose origin we know nothing, nor of what becomes of them when they disappear. They have neither ancestors nor posterity. They alone comprise their entire race."





SILAS TOLD.

BY LAURENCE CLAY.

ON the morning of the 14th day of September, 1767, certain London streets leading from the Old Bailey westward toward Tyburn, were early astir with somewhat unusual and grim excitement.

Only ten days before, one Mrs. Brownrigg had cruelly done to death one of her apprentice girls. Inasmuch as the girl's decease had alone put a period to a long course of barbarity suffered at the hands of her mistress, the citizens were much enraged against the latter. This, but the 14th day of the month, was to see the crime expiated on the gallows at Tyburn. Many citizens of the meaner and vulgar sort, and not a few of those counted superior, early assembled without the walls of the new prison, known then, as now, as Newgate, the successor to Ludgate Prison. Not yet, however, had it become customary to erect gallows in the open space in Old Bailey, and so obviate the dreadful scenes which frequently occurred on those fateful journeys westward, for Tyburn still retained its unenviable pre-eminence.

Early that morning the diminutive mailed door in the Old Bailey wall of Newgate had admitted, among others, Silas Told, intent on his self-appointed mission as spiritual advisor to the capitally condemned. He had already, on

previous days, spent much time in exhorting and preparing Mrs. Brownrigg for her last long journey, and not without success. While the crowd gathered without, passing the time in ribaldry and menace, within the walls there arose, repeatedly, hymn and prayer from a small group consisting of the condemned, her husband and son, the prison ordinary, with three clergymen from neighbouring churches, and Silas Told.

In due course the mailed wicket-door again opened, and Mrs. Brownrigg, too weak to walk alone, was helped to the cart which was to convey her and the gibbet to the place of her doom. A Rev. Mr. James seated himself on her right, and Told on her left, but no sooner did the cart begin to move towards its destination than malignant cheers and "hellish curses and imprecations" burst from the angry populace. Truly, but a step from hymn and prayer to curses and imprecations! Told, while admitting that the woman's crime was a horrible one, yet solemnly affirms that the attitude and conduct of the populace, more especially the women filling the carts which lined the streets on both sides, was such that none "but the damned spirits let loose from the infernal pit" could have equalled. Many times before had he shared menace and danger with condemned criminals in carrying out his conscience-imposed duties, but never before had he witnessed such license. In reading Told's account of this occasion, one can't help but think of the days of the tumbril and sansculottism which a neighbouring capital suffered a generation later. However concerned Told and his fellow-worker may have been for the wretched criminal in danger of being lynched, she, apparently, was utterly oblivious of her surroundings. But it was not apathy; she had, or claimed to have, attained some sort of peace, nevertheless she broke down utterly when the dreadful spot—Tyburn

trees—was reached. Thousands were there gathered—a motley mob, the scum of East and West London, itinerant vendors and flaunting vice improving the occasion. Told says that the behaviour of thousands was such as “no part of the habitable world would be guilty of except the inhabitants of Great Britain.” Amid such surroundings and the hearty curses, gibes, and threats of the assembled, the wretched Mrs Brownrigg had to wait three-quarters of an hour while the gibbet was being erected. How Told and one or two others managed to sing two hymns amidst such scenes and sounds one can scarcely conceive. Surely the words of sympathy, spoken then in ministration by Told and his coadjutor, aided by the awful compression of her fast-nearing and shameful end, were much needed, and apparently were of much benefit to the culprit. Told was the last to leave her, and as, with a word of consolation to her, he descended the cart, it drew from under the gallows and Mrs. Brownrigg was arraigned before another tribunal.

It was amid such scenes as these, though with many varied circumstances, that Told for over thirty years laboured without monetary reward, but with marvellous spiritual success. Four years before his death in 1779, he wrote down an account of his life. The manuscript appears to have come into the hands of one Samuel Smith who had known Told some years before his decease. This account was published in London, in 1786, as a tract of 174 pages, published probably by this same Smith in behalf of the followers of John Wesley. Told had been one of Wesley's converts, and indeed his prison labours were doubtless connected with the work of that character which Wesley had prosecuted for nearly fifty years, thus anticipating in no unimportant measure the labours of John Howard. The tract bore the imprint of Messrs.



Gilbert and Plummer, of Cree Church Lane, and contained a preface by this Mr. Smith wherein the latter vouches the integrity of Told, and that Told's outward conduct corresponded with his profession. Mr. Smith also evidently appended at the close of the narrative a paragraph giving the date of Mr. Told's decease, and concluded the tract with some remarks in appreciation of his meritorious labours.

A second edition was certainly published, but the British Museum does not contain a copy thereof. I can only surmise that this second edition was published three years later than the first, viz., in 1789. I surmise this from the fact that the preface to the third edition, published in 1796, was signed and dated by John Wesley in 1789. This, it would appear, must have been a preface copied from the second edition. Wesley, in this preface, describes Told as of good understanding, although not much indebted to education, and further states that he was a person of eminent veracity.

This vouching of Told's character and veracity, coming from Wesley himself and following that deemed necessary in the first edition by Samuel Smith, is an indication of the extraordinary character of the narrative, and probably of an amount of dubiety which its contents had occasioned.

The third edition (curtailed somewhat) was published by a George Whitefield, the same whom Wesley named in his will, with others, as legatees of his "types and printing presses in trust for the use of the Conference," and not unlikely a son of the more widely known Rev. George Whitefield.

A later edition was published in Dublin in 1813 under the auspices of the Wesleyan body there, and was sold at 1s. 8d. per copy.

Meanwhile, in 1806, William Cowdroy, Junr., of Salford

(son of the promoter of Cowdroy's "Manchester Gazette," a long since defunct Manchester journal), reprinted the first edition in its entirety. The old title ran, in part at least, as follows: "An Account of the Life and Dealings of God with Silas Told, late Preacher of the Gospel, wherein is set forth," etc., etc. It is evidently modelled on the title page of the Rev. George Whitefield's (not the printer) own account of "The Life and Dealings of God with" him, published some years before. There were many similar tracts published last century, though I venture to say few equally interesting and valuable as Told's. Told's veracity, at least, had other vouching than that suggested as possible in one appended to an account of John Gordon, A.M., who, says Gordon in his title page, "is now in London ready to vindicate what he had written." Those were duelling days!

We now propose to cull from this little tract, affording, as it does, glimpses of 18th century life at home and abroad, some of its salient features. The tract, as such, has an interest all its own. Times and manners change, even customs stale, literature hath larger volume and other channels, differing lights and charms. The sixpenny novel was not then known, but the shilling tract was. All this is eminently trite, but it is as well to remind ourselves of it in order to understand some of the reasons why this booklet or brochure formerly had, even in Lancashire, a popularity which might be termed a vogue.

We of to-day know little of Cowdroy, Junr., but he stands responsible for many typographical errors herein; and the present generation knows even less of this Silas than a certain Pharoah knew of Joseph; but a sketch of his autobiographical tale will repay our brief attention.

One could imagine that Told entered this sub-solar sphere fated to experience what we may be excused for

saying would prove a warm time of it, for he informs us, with undue solemnity, that he was born "at the Lime Kilns, near the Hot Wells" in Bristol, in 1711. He would appear to have come, as he says, of very "creditable" folk, though they were seemingly more expert in the acquisition than the retention of the good things of this world. Both his father and grandfather were by profession medicine men, and on his mother's side Told came of seafaring men of the quarter-deck. His father meeting with misfortune, was laid under "the necessity of going out doctor of a guinea-man," but being unable, in the direst need, to cure himself, he died on the voyage out, and as a consequence Silas and his sister were put out to nurse.

As the good old man of 64 looks back on his early years he fancies he can recall in memory scenes of his childhood from three years of age upward. He relates how, in these tender years, he and his sister (whose name was of full 17th century flavour—*Dulcybella*) wandered together in fields and woods, conversing of God and happiness.

I think the lad Told was of a very impressionable nature, and possessed a very vivid imagination. The author, indeed, presents in himself a study in psychology. Much that he relates is inexplicable on any other grounds than those having reference, not to his veracity, but his attitude of mind and peculiar temperament. From his early years he exhibited a religious temperament of peculiar quality, the which was present, even if overlaid, during a course of several years of evil living. Prior to these years of wild-oat sowing, and immediately subsequent to them, Told had his times when he saw visions and suffered what may be termed spiritistic phenomena. Like St. Peter and St. Paul of old, like Joan of Arc and Savonarola of later times, Told occasionally had marvellous spiritual experiences; whether of divine agency or more subjective

monition it is not for me to say. I believe them to be related in sincerity. Be the interpretation of these matters what it may, all that we are now concerned with is the fact that at more than one period of his career he had genuine experience of what he deemed to be supernatural spiritual phenomena. The first occasion of this character, or related thereto, refers to this time of the early years spent with his sister Dulcybella. He says :

"One remarkable circumstance I must observe. When my sister and self were very young we wandered out into King's Wood, and lost ourselves in the woods, and were in the utmost consternation lest we should be devoured by wild beasts ; but quickly the kind providence of God permitted a large dog to come behind us ; although no house was within a mile from the wood, yet the dog drove us clear out of the wood into our knowledge ; what was remarkable, the dog never barked at us. And when, in our knowledge we looked around us to behold the dog, but he was not to be seen."

And he relates how, on the same occasion, this experience was repeated.

At eight years of age Silas was admitted to the Colson Foundation at Bristol. The Colson banquets of to-day remind one of the memory of this sometime journeyman soap-boiler, of whom and his charities Told makes a digression to give a sympathetic account to what Told calls "the good man's perpetuative memory."

At 14, Told (to use his fine phrase) was "bound apprentice to the seas." His first experience on board was both tragical and comical. Being, as he somewhat naively states, "ignorant of the maxims of the world," he blundered over his first commission, and comfortably disposed of a dinner of which he was intended to be but the bearer to the first mate. This was the initial cause of acts of barbarity which

Told suffered during a long course of years. Hard and cruel treatment from superiors was supplemented by starvation rations consequent upon dilatory trade winds. He also had experience of a tornado in Jamaica Harbour, resulting in the destruction of no less than seventy-five vessels. Decomposing corpses, which the sea refused to retain, strewed the shore for a long time thereafter, and were left to the scavenging of carrion crows and other carrion birds. Pestilence became rife. Silas lay in a warehouse sick of a fever for 11 months, cared for and dosed with "Jesuit's bark" by a negro. He relates (and you will note how utterly unconscious he is of any sense of the ludicrous in his narration) how "at length my master gave me up, and I wandered up and down the town, almost parched with the insufferable blaze of the sun, till I was resolved to lay me down and die, as I had neither money nor friend. Accordingly I fixed upon a dunghill at the east end of the town of Kingston, and, being in so weak a condition, I pondered much upon Job's case, and considered mine similar to that of his. However, I was fully resigned to death, nor had I the slightest expectations of relief from any quarter; yet the kind providence of God was over me, and raised me up a friend in an entire stranger."

It is intensely droll, this picture of Silas fully determined to lay him down and die, and selecting a dunghill, first drawing philosophic comparisons between his case and that of Job likewise on a dunghill. The succour referred to came at the instance of a London captain, whose humanity was stirred at the sordid condition of his youthful compatriot, and well it might be. Silas was eventually restored to his master, much as a runaway slave might have been.

Told's return voyage was remarkable for what he

believed to be an extraordinary event, but it was of a character not deemed supernatural in these days. It was what we may understand to have been a sea-mirage, or rather land-mirage at sea. After months of being out of sight of land, the welcome vision of land was hailed one day at the set of sun. The deceived captain parted with a jollification of ten gallons of rum and 20 lbs. of sugar to the crew before he found out the "supernaturalness" of the event celebrated with such an intolerable deal of rum and no bread. It seems that they ultimately came to the conclusion that they had seen "'Old Brazille' destroyed by an earthquake 500 or 600 years before," and even to-day the legend of Atlantis Island dies hard. It is also to be noted that on the map alleged to have been used by Columbus a large island off the west coast of Ireland is shown as "Brazil."

Told was now literally "consigned" to another captain without reference to his own wishes in the matter. These old sea-dogs (sea-devils, some of them) enjoyed, and doubtless were secretly proud of, patronymics which cannot be contemplated to-day without a smile. "Captain Smiler of London," "Captain Pills of Bristol," Captains Roach, Beans, Caley, and so forth, and Told's present lord of his universe enjoyed the appellation of Timothy Tucker. Now, T. Tucker aboard the quarter-deck was, Told says, the greatest of villains, but Captain T. T. ashore, assumed the character and temper of a saint. The first demonstration Told had of the notorious conduct of this saint-villain to whom he had been consigned much like a chattel, was "the enforcement of a white woman out of her native country for the selling of her to the black Prince of Bonny."

Told gives an unconsciously humorous account of how the ladies of the Moorish King Arigo's household at-

tempted to cure him (Told) of neuralgia. They stripped him naked, and were inducing, he says, a studious frame of mind, while he sat on a stool with his feet in hot water. One wonders how it was so managed! Then they startled him very smartly out of that induced brown study by suddenly dashing in his face a hot cloth from the basin. The pain was gone in an instant, and, says Told, "here I penetrated their maxims in performing the cure"; such penetration, marvellous considering all, came doubtless of the studious frame of mind.

I must refer you to the book for some account of the atrocities openly committed by this Saint Tucker; how the white woman mentioned succumbed to her miseries, and, being committed to the deep, was yet observed a week thereafter to be floating upon the water. One thinks of Eugene Aram's victim, which would not be hidden. How cruelty and murder was done in open day and on deck upon a poor negro, who, amidst all his agonies, made his silence the more mute and pathetic by but one word: "Adomma—so be it." None called Tucker to account.

Atrocities such as are related herein are matched by others upon unimpeachable records. The iniquities concurrent with the prosecution of the slave trade, and bred and fostered by it, were in the fullest sense damnable, as was sufficiently evidenced by a writer in a recent number of "*Scribner's Magazine*." The canting and euphuistic title or justification for this traffic was "enforcement of trade."

One cargo of slaves in Tucker's ship (a cargo numbering 79 in all) were battened down between decks one night with scant room to move a single inch, and almost scantier ventilation. At midnight a universal shriek was heard, and on the morrow the wretched beings were hoisted on deck, only to find fully half of them dead from fright and

crushing. In their "wild confusion of mind" they had suffered severe panic in the night, deeming that "Egbo" or the devil was in their midst 'neath those dark hatches. Forty were heaved overboard. Later, friend Told met "Egbo" in the flesh, and was, it seems, more than a match for him. He says: "Accordingly I went on shore. When I arrived at the top of the hill I heard an uncommon shrieking of women. As I drew near a division of houses I saw what, through curiosity, I had long wished to see, namely, "Egbo," a native in a fine silk grass mesh net, so curiously made to fit him that nothing but his hands and feet appeared; the net ended with a fringe not unlike ruffles. This man is looked upon as both god and devil, and all stand in the most profound awe of him, from the highest to the lowest.

I stood still to see the sequel of his caprice, and observed that in his hand he had a green bough wherewith he was whipping the women's posteriors as they went naked, chasing them out of one house into another, and as they were exceedingly terrified, and considered it a heavy curse when Egbo struck them, therefore they fled from him as we would from hell flames. However, when he had satisfied himself by lashing the poor women, he came out through the middle of the court, and through the meshes of his net I was discovered by him. Presently he advanced towards me, with full purpose to let me also feel the weight of his green bough, upon which I instantly drew my hanger with a resolution to cut off his head. He then ran away, and I saw him no more." Devils do flee when sufficiently resisted, so it is understood.

Perhaps enough has been quoted to make needful any more than a reference to his further seafaring adventures. Pirates, plague, "moschettos," storms, all made life varied for him. Very valuable, but too long to quote, are the



pictures he affords us of life in New England between 1720 and 1730.

Shipwrecked on Crooked Island, off the coast of New England, the subject of privation and adventure, but well-treated by the scanty settlers, Told ultimately so ingratiated himself into the favour of the Governor's family that he was fixed upon, if he acquiesced, to espouse one of the daughters of the household. But this Barkis was not "willin'," and eventually he and his companions travelled to the mainland. Some of the events narrated by him present quite a charming little idyll to one's mind, of New England life when the 18th century was still young. I wish I could quote them, but space will not permit. They journeyed on foot to its first founded city, Plymouth, of "Mayflower" fame, and thence to Boston, which latter city, even at that time, boasted of no less than "17 spired meetings." There, for four months, Told "lodged with Deacon Townsend, by trade a blacksmith." During those four months he never heard (and he speaks as one strongly opposed to Dissenters) one oath uttered, nor the name of the Lord taken in vain." No lewd house was suffered in the whole town, no Sabbath-breaking, nor even journeying on the Sabbath was allowed, nor did he "experience any extortion at their hands." Told says even then Boston was famed in every city in Europe. Compare this with what he says of the Leghorn of those days, with its numberless common prostitutes tolerated by the Government, and with a considerable portion of the city allotted to them, for which protection they, in turn, protected the city by providing for the upkeep of numerous war-galleys, doubtless largely slave-manned.

Told closed his seafaring experience in the service of his King, in that he was impressed therein on his return after these adventures just as his ship reached the Isle of

Wight. He was paid off a few years later, in 1736, he being then 25 years of age, and recently married to one formerly Verney. He obtained employment ashore in the form of a schoolmastership at Staplefoot Tauney, Essex, at the penalising salary of £14 per annum. Later he acted as a bookkeeper to a Watling Street bricklayer. We may remark that bricklayers have not thriven in Watling Street these many years. The interest in his London life (a period of over 40 years) arises mainly from two causes, his remarkable religious experiences, and his noble self-sacrificing work among the capitally condemned malefactors.

His was an essentially religious character, and he was always impressionable in that direction. He tells us in all seriousness how, as a lad of twelve, he began to read pious books, especially "Sherlock on Death," and a few like-minded lads joined him in its consideration. One must not forget that very alarming discourses were heard even from school pulpits in those days, and death and hell were very real for a few privileged spirits.

These impressions of early years were never really obliterated in Told's mind, and though he says he often fell into grievous sin all through and after his seafaring days, he never so fell but what he at length reflected upon it all with a sense of guilt and abhorrence. Terrified, too, was he with awful dreams, and never was he, though leading a wicked life, without fear of death and the judgment to come, and hell behind all. In 1740 he was induced by a young bricklayer named Greaves to go to a local foundry in London to hear the Rev. John Wesley preach. He went unwillingly,—he had no regard for Methodists, as they were even then called in derision, and he says "he could not abide Dissenters."

Greaves fetched him out of bed at 4 a.m., for service

was at 5. Need we say that at that meeting in the foundry he became convinced of his call to higher service? He says: "As the preacher spoke, a small, still voice entered his left ear (how ludicrous it seems to be that on such a topic he should particularize which ear!)—entered with these words: 'This is the truth.'" Told vouches that for five-and-thirty years he never once doubted of those truths and doctrines received amongst them, viz., "of salvation by that faith productive of good works." Let me say here that this remark is characteristic of Told. Extraordinary as are some of the spiritual experiences he relates as his, and which will surprise and amuse the reader, this side of his character is yet always accompanied by a weighty sanity that must have proved his salvation. We have the small still voice in the left ear, but we have also a sane belief only in the faith that is productive of good works. He could tell a condemned murderer most emphatically that our Redeemer came into the world to save us from our sins, not in them.

His life in London had its changes. Some six years of poverty (he subsisted himself at one time on 9d. per week) were followed by an increase of worldly prosperity, though his wife died before it came. Despite Wesley's remark as to the smallness of Told's indebtedness to education, it was under Wesley's auspices that he kept a very successful school for many years at that same foundry already mentioned. And it was as a result of one of Wesley's 5 a.m. sermons to his school children that Told was led to consider the lot of those in prison, and to visit them. The thought that he never had carried out the injunction to visit the imprisoned made him utterly miserable. Providentially, shortly after this, a message came to him at the school that there were ten malefactors in Newgate under sentence of death, and they would be glad if any of the

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Methodists would go and pray with them. Within an hour Told was in the condemned cell on his errand of mercy, and thus began the good work which for 35 years, to the time of his decease, he persisted in amid contumely and danger, and without other reward than the thanks and gratitude of here one and there another, and the approval of his conscience.

Executions were numerous; the "dead warrant" was more often than not a list of many names, wherein it might happen—as indeed it did on one occasion—that a name was included of a man condemned for no greater crime than, being driven by hunger and affection for starving wife and child, he begged or constrained a few coppers (6d. in all) from passers by. Days of public executions were days of public holiday, obscene and riotous days, days of degradation. Prison discipline was bad, justice sometimes suborned, not seldom hasty and erroneous, respites obtainable, but not always by the most deserving. Indeed, the preparation and promotion of petitions for pardon seems to have provided a calling for some, and of those condemned the most wealthy, and not the most innocent, had the best chance of success. Amid all this Told steadily held on his way, advising, exhorting, denouncing, having the privileged entrée to the condemned cell, meeting the secret or overt opposition of the prison ordinary, yet at times encouraged by success almost beyond belief. Many who came to a shameful end at Tyburn had cause to be deeply grateful to this ex-sailor, so much in earnest, so sane when sanity and mental grip were so needful, and yet withal blessed with a spiritual insight and magnetic influence that his labours commended themselves not only to those so sadly concerned, but practically to all civic London. We need not repeat any of the cases he graphically and sympathetically relates

—all were sad enough, most of them striking, some most singular. One case related by him, perhaps the most interesting, is of one John Lancaster, "cast for robbery." Amongst other particulars, Told relates how Lancaster's body, after hanging the prescribed time at Tyburn, was violently carried off by a posse of ruffians to some anatomically-inclined surgeon at Paddington. Later, eight sailors coming along, drunk with the day's revelry, learn from a bystanding gin-seller of the corpse's destiny, follow it up, rescue it, and carry it about town for hours, ultimately travelling eastward to Shoreditch. Tiring of their self-imposed and objectless task, they determine to leave the body at the first door they come to, which they do. The commotion which shortly ensued brought the woman of the house to the door, and there, on the door-step, lay the executed body of her own son, unwittingly, as far as that fact was concerned, left there in sport by the sailors.

In conclusion, let me remark that the work has all the interest which attaches to scenes of town-life and seafaring life of days gone never to return. Scenes related with a graphic power and vividness not unlike the author of "*Robinson Crusoe*." Though lacking humour and the saving sense of the ludicrous, Told is a born storyteller, delights himself in the pose of his facts and their picturesque and vivid relation. He does not scorn a digression, and there is a certain—shall we say word-rolling or easy effort?—in the course of his narrations, which speaks of the gratification it was to Told to "spin his yarns" graphically, though truthfully. Yet, behind all, there is a serious purpose as tending not to the glory of Silas himself, but rather a conscious effort at setting forth "God's marvellous dealings" with him. Of the charity, and sympathy with the most degraded and also the most unfortunate of his day, and his labours among them, one cannot speak too

appreciatively. He was merciful and humane beyond his time. While John Howard was a mere lad, Wesley and his agents were visiting prisoners, ministering to their material and spiritual needs; and Told's efforts, also, though largely individualistic, were undoubtedly under the auspices of Wesley, among whose converts Told must be numbered.

Since it was Wesley (then of the City Road) who buried Told, in all probability the latter rests in Bunhill Fields, close by, and not far from the scene of his labours. Honoured be his memory!





## BOADICEA: A BALLAD OF BRITAIN.

BY TINSLEY PRATT.

When the sacred shores of Mona felt the tide of battle  
flow  
Inland to her woodland altars, but the winds and waters  
know  
That dark story of her conquest, eighteen hundred years  
ago ;  
How the Roman legions harried then the land with sword  
and fire,  
Sparing, in their lust of carnage, neither child, nor wife, nor  
sire,  
And the cup of desolation filled alone their hearts' desire.  
But the tidings of the battle swept across the narrow sea,  
And the mighty heart of Britain felt that she had once  
been free,  
Ere unto the haughty Roman she had bowed the servile  
knee.  
Britain, where the plunging surges lash the tempest-beaten  
shore,  
Glad with all the soul of conquest ; when the face of Nature  
wore  
All the glory of the morning, while within her hand she  
bore  
First fruits of a land that knew not labour in the mills of  
Time,

When her sons were stout and lusty, children of that early  
prime,  
And the sun of heaven lightened daily o'er a golden clime.  
Thus she mused, ere yet the Roman launched his galleys  
on the tide,  
Swore to lay his chains upon her and abase her island  
pride,  
Though the soul of Freedom flourished on her altars  
deified.

Now went forth a cry for vengeance, raised again and yet  
again ;  
Loud from hearth to hearth it echoed, wide throughout the  
tribes of men,  
And the peopled cities heard it, and the nurslings of the  
fen.

Then uprose a woman, saying, " Dwellers by the Eastern  
Sea,  
Gird yourselves in might of battle, Britain's sons if still  
ye be ;  
Let the unborn child be suckled in the light of liberty !  
Dash the bonds of Rome asunder, let their eagle kiss the  
dust !  
Though they come with words of promise eye them with a  
dark mistrust :  
Let your maids no longer serve for victims to a Roman's  
lust :  
Furnish forth your braves for battle, let your chariots  
thunder past ,  
Draw your swords for death—or conquest—let the hungry  
dart be cast ;  
Back upon his legioned spearmen hurl the ancient foe at  
last !  
Let my words be wafted northward ; bid our western kins-  
folk know



We, the captives, swear to lead in captive chains the  
Roman foe.

Reap the harvest of the victors that with bitter tears we  
sow ;

Children of the deathless Cymry, muster from your hills  
afar,

Let the thought of sleepless vengeance light your pathway  
like a star ;

Come with sword and spear for conquest, and the scythèd  
battle-car.

Hear me, all ye Trinobantes—O, Silurian Britons, hear!

Pour your hosts upon their legions till they reel in slavish  
fear,

As the storm wind sweeps the forest when the autumn  
leaves are sere!

Shall a woman's words be measured in your thought  
as idle things,

Though a British Queen, the speaker, offspring of a line  
of kings,

Trodden under foot and helpless, like a bird with broken  
wings?

Has the spirit of your fathers perished with the lapse of  
time,

That ye lie and batten—creatures gotten of the sun and  
slime,

Hirelings to the Roman Cæsar, and the wolfish lords of  
crime?

Shall a tearful woman's pleading seek to move your hearts  
in vain,

Though this form that crowned a kingdom oft the cruel  
blow hath ta'en

From the brutal hand of Catus, and hath felt the scourge  
and chain?

Nay, I see the fires of slaughter lighten in those famished  
eyes,  
And your heedful ears give answer to the ravished maidens'  
cries,  
For the hour of vengeance quickens, and the heart of pity  
dies;  
And I see within the distance, where the joyful dawn  
appears,  
For the golden morrow wakens, and the hour of freedom  
nears  
When the victors' arms shall reckon all the bitter wrongs  
of years!"  
Eloquent beyond man's telling, from her stricken heart of  
woe,  
Came those burning words a woman uttered 'gainst the  
Roman foe  
In that dusk of blight and sorrow, eighteen hundred years  
ago!



